

THE DIAL

DECEMBER 1924

VIRGINIA WOOLF

BY CLIVE BELL

WHEN, in 1919, Mrs Woolf published *Night and Day*, that able journalist, Mr Massingham, who might have been the most successful editor in England could he but have let alone the two subjects of which he knew nothing—art and literature—flew into a rage. This he did because someone had likened Mrs Woolf to Jane Austen; which so provoked him that, *à propos de bottes*, he flung off one of those high-minded, ill-founded, gossipo-critical notes of his, ostensibly to show how unlike they were, in fact showing only how much he disliked the art of Mrs Woolf, and proving nothing beyond the fact that the art of both was beyond his comprehension. The art of Mrs Woolf, to be sure, is very different from that of Miss Austen; but the critic, I surmise—I have no notion who he was—wished to call attention, not to a similarity of manner, but to the fact that in Mrs Woolf we have an authoress who, by purely feminine means (herein resembling Miss Austen and differing from Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot) had created something which takes its place, not with the best contemporary literature only, but in the great tradition of English letters.

I must say that if this unknown critic had read no more of her writings than the two first novels his judgement did infinite credit to his insight. For most of those even who had followed her career from the time when she first found editors not unwilling to give a chance to a girl who happened to be the daughter of Leslie Stephen, most, I say, felt that, till the publication of *Jacob's Room*, she had never publicly proved what they had never doubted—that she possessed genius of a high order. For you must not forget that her

earliest work—reviews, generally long ones, written for *The Times Literary Supplement*, at that time perhaps the best critical weekly in the world—was anonymous. Simultaneously she was writing, and confiding in manuscript to a few friends, purely imaginative work, stories and sketches; and it is significant that to her friends these appeared less interesting and characteristic than her reviews. I think I can see why. In reviews, as in her purely imaginative writings, she depended on that familiar impressionist method of hers: she read the book, saw it whole from her peculiar yet widely out-looking corner, and then created a form to match her impression. Thus, her critical essays have the quality, the individuality, and some of the intensity of works of art; and it will be a thousand pities if they are not soon collected into a volume, since such a volume would give a great deal of pleasure to people who are worth pleasing. But, besides her creative gift, Mrs Woolf possesses a delicate intellect, and already in these early days possessed what one may call "inherited culture." Now in her purely imaginative pieces she could make but sparing use, at that time, of this intellectual equipment; whereas, in reviews, she was not obliged to fly off into space trusting solely to the thread of imagination, but, whenever she chose, could catch hold of and rest upon the recognized props of criticism. She had a right to chop ideas and toy with history; and she did. And it was in these moments of rest from the painful business of self-expression that she gave us our first taste of that delicious wit which I would like at once to distinguish from those flights of humorous fancy which continually enchant us in the novels.

"Little is known of Sappho, and that little is not wholly to her credit. Lady Jane Grey has merit, but is undeniably obscure. Of George Sand the more we know the less we approve. George Eliot was led into evil ways which not all her philosophy can excuse. The Brontës, however highly we rate their genius, lacked that indefinable something which marks the lady; Mrs. Browning was a married woman; Jane Austen, Fanny Burney, and Maria Edgeworth have been done already, so that, what with one thing and another, Mary Russell Mitford is the only woman left. This is no vain parade of erudition; we are trying to find out what considerations had weight with Miss Hill when she decided to write Mary

Russell Mitford and Her Surroundings. Two emerge from the rest and may be held of paramount importance. In the first place Miss Mitford was a lady; in the second she was born in the year 1787.

"'Surroundings' as they are called, are invariably eighteenth century surroundings, Bonaparte is the limit of the imagination on one side, and Monmouth on the other. It would be fatal if fancy took to toying with Prince Albert or sporting with King John. To do her justice, fancy knows her place; she keeps strictly to the eighteenth century. The other question is more obscure. What is it to be a lady? At any rate one must not raise one's voice. Of a lady it is enough to say 'Here Mary Russell Mitford passed sixteen years of her life, and here she got to know and love not only their own beautiful grounds but also every turn of the surrounding shady lanes.' Her loves were vegetable and her lanes were shady. She was educated at the school where Jane Austen was educated; she visited Lyme Regis; she saw London from the top of St. Paul's. Several distinguished literary gentlemen paid her compliments and came to tea. When the dining room ceiling fell down it did not fall on her head; when she took a ticket in the lottery she did win the prize. But how dangerous a thing is life! Can one be sure that anything not wholly made of mahogany will to the very end stand empty in the sun? Even cupboards have their secret springs, and when, inadvertently we are sure, Miss Hill touches this one, out, terrible to relate, topples a stout old gentleman. In plain English Miss Mitford had a father. There is nothing actually improper in that. Many women have had fathers. But Miss Mitford's father was kept in a cupboard; that is to say he was not a nice father. Gluttonous, bibulous, amorous, old Dr Mitford was anything but nice."

This is intellectual and witty.

"If that mark was made by a nail, it can't have been for a picture, it must have been for a miniature—the miniature of a lady with white powdered curls, powder-dusted cheeks, and lips like red carnations. A fraud of course, for the people who had this house before us would have chosen pictures in that way—an old picture for an old room. That is the sort of people they were—very interesting people, and I think of them so often, in such queer places,

because one will never see them again, never know what happened next. She wore a flannel dog collar round her throat, and he drew posters for an oatmeal company, and they wanted to leave this house because they wanted to change their style of furniture, so he said, and he was in process of saying that in his opinion art should have ideas behind it when we were torn asunder, as one is torn from the old lady about to pour out tea and the young man about to hit the tennis ball in the back garden of the suburban villa as one rushes past in the train."

That is a flight of fancy. Meanwhile, we have left Virginia Woolf—Virginia Stephen to be exact—writing brilliant reviews and articles, which fly on the wings of imagination certainly, but take long rests on the telegraph wires of intellect and the broad roofs of erudition even; and who, all the time, is trying to create works of pure imagination. As these are not entirely successful, we must assume that she is trying for something, which she can reach perhaps, but not yet grasp. For what is she trying?

Her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, does no more than adumbrate a reply. In my opinion it was a remarkable failure: a failure partly because, like a sauce that has over-simmered, it had been writing too long and had grown stiff; partly because one felt some discrepancy between the comic and tragic parts. Yet both were parts of the same vision; and it was of that vision the author was trying to express her sense. Here was her problem. What made the book remarkable, apart from the extraordinary beauty of the prose, was that the vision was her own. Neither did Mrs Woolf accept the ready-cooked, hot and strong, cinematographic world beloved of modern novelists, nor yet that amalgam of nicely tested instances and inferences which for the ordinary cultivated person—for Mr Galsworthy to take a modern example or Thackeray to take a more ancient—does duty for a picture of life; she had her peculiar vision. What is more, I do not recall, fatiguing though it must be to remain for ever perched on that minute pinnacle which is a personal point of view, a single occasion—even in this first novel—on which she observes her characters through one of those street-corner telescopes up which we can all have a squint for tuppence.

In 1917 Virginia Woolf published at the Hogarth Press *The Mark on the Wall*. This is perfect in its kind; and, till the publi-

cation of Jacob's Room remained for me her masterpiece. It is the expression of one continuous state of mind—a day-dream. And the realized impression of a subtle and various consciousness floating on deep and slightly ruffled waters with no hand at the rudder is so close, that at first reading one is tempted to exclaim, "This is no sculpted form, but a life-mask." One would be wrong, however. This is no realistic study, no miracle of observation. I have no notion what a psychologist would say about it, nor I fancy could an intelligent psychologist feel that any professional comment would be in place; for what we have before us is not the description of a reverie, but the equivalent of a reverie—a work of art that is to say. Only we cannot help noticing the peculiar beauty of the mind that dreams, the unexpected though fundamentally rational transition from mood to mood, while we are moved by the shapes in which the moods clothe themselves.

" . . . To show how very little control of our possessions we have—what an accidental affair this living is after all our civilization—let me just count over a few of the things lost in one lifetime, beginning, for that seems always the most mysterious of all losses—what cat would gnaw, what rat would nibble—with three pale blue canisters of book-binding tools? Then there were the bird cages, the iron hoops, the steel skates, the Queen Anne coal-scuttle, the bagatelle board, the hand organ—all gone, and jewels too. Opals and emeralds, they lie about the roots of turnips. What a scraping paring affair it is to be sure! The wonder is that I've any clothes on my back, that I sit surrounded by solid furniture at this moment. Why, if one wants to compare life to anything, one must liken it to being blown through the Tube at fifty miles an hour—landing at the other end without a single hair pin in one's hair! Shot out at the feet of God entirely naked! Tumbling head over heels in the asphodel meadows like brown paper parcels pitched down a shoot in the post office! . . . "

Here, it seems to me, whatever our aesthetic theories, we cannot be indifferent to the mind of the writer. It is the sense of a mind at once concrete and imaginative that we are given, a mind logical in its most lively flights and intensely sensitive to the essential absurdity of every situation in which human beings play a part.

Night and Day is, I think, her most definite failure. She chose a perfectly conventional, a Victorian, theme, the *premiers amours* of five young people: it is all about a pair of engagements. Naturally this shocked the novelists of the red-flower-of-passion school, most of whom write reviews also—a convenient habit in many ways. She should have written about the *quatre-vingt-dixième* to make her work strong and passionate and *real* (the grand *desideratum*); she should have written about Life. Intelligent people know, of course, that there is no sort of reason why an artist should not choose a conventional theme if it happens to suit him: many of the greatest artists have. Before taking exception to the subject, our young tigers and yours, Mr Editor of THE DIAL, should have meditated Jane Austen more profoundly. A conventional theme is as good in itself as another; for art consists not in theme, but in expression, a truism which to the student of contemporary fiction may well come as a surprise. The only question about subject to be asked is—has the artist chosen one the matching of which with his aesthetic experience will call forth all his powers and gallop the last ounce out of them? I thought we had agreed years ago, when we used to wrangle about painting, that, *qua* subject, a pot of flowers is as good as the crucifixion. From which it follows that a conventional theme may be as good as an unconventional, and an unconventional as a conventional. Only, when an artist relies on the nature of his theme for producing what passes for an aesthetic effect, as Gautier and Poe, Mr Masefield and Dostoevsky, Greuze and Blake seem to do, there is some reason for suspecting him of artistic feebleness. That way melodrama lies. To feel a need for violent and surprising subjects does seem to imply inferiority in the artist, and a coarse palate in the critic: to feel the need I say, not to feel that, in a particular case, such a subject affords the only appropriate medium of expression. Mrs Woolf, at any rate, has no need to stun us with her subject, since she can move us to the limit of our sensibility by her art.

Yet the theme of Night and Day was ill-chosen: it was ill-chosen because it cramped and choked the natural deflagration of the artist's mind. She chose the time-honoured complication: A thinks he is in love with B, who, thinking this is as much as can be expected of life, accepts him; C appears on the scene and is at once recognized as the right man for B, but in despair almost marries D for whom he feels rather what B feels for A; arrives, to save the

situation, E who turns out to be just the girl for A. Here is a subject for Jane Austen, into which she could have fitted all her curious knowledge of the upper-middle-class heart. But Mrs Woolf is not a born story-teller: wherefore, so much of her energy had to go into manipulating the stiff little levers of her machine, so considerable an effort was required to keep in hand all the straining weights and compensations of her narrative, that, though she often contrives to let her fancy roam, rarely does she find space and energy to drive it to the limit of its endurance. She is cramped by her subject. Given the theme, the story has to develop along lines of strict probability, off which on one occasion—the scene where Katharine is discovered in an alcove and the grand manner—it rather alarmingly jumps. To bring all her chickens home to roost is a job too exacting to allow of many pranks by the way. We seek—not in vain—but seek we must those exquisite digressions which, if I may be allowed what at first looks like a paradox, are an integral part of *Jacob's Room*, of which—to go a little further in perversity—*The Mark on the Wall* is an example standing alone, a digression from nowhere. All which notwithstanding, in this as in the first novel, you will find scene after scene of exquisite beauty and surprising depth, and one—that between Rodney and Katharine on the road to Lampsher—hardly to be matched in contemporary literature.

Follow several short stories and sketches, brought together and published in 1921, under the title of *Monday or Tuesday*. This is Virginia Woolf practising. Apparently, she herself was dissatisfied with *Night and Day* and felt the need of discovering an appropriate form. Hence, I presume, these experiments: of which one, *A Society*, is quite beneath her genius; and another, *A Haunted House*, in style at any rate, seems to me unfortunately redolent of contemporary influences: by the way, in this volume is reprinted *The Mark on the Wall*. She is in search of a form in which to express a vision—a vision of which she is now perfectly sure. That is the problem of which *Jacob's Room* is the brilliantly successful solution; but before attempting to analyse the solution I had better try to formulate, what so far I seem only to have fumbled, my notion, that is, of the vision to be expressed.

What makes Virginia Woolf's books read queerly is that they have at once the air of high fantasticality and blazing realism. And the explanation of this is, unless I mistake, that, though she is

externalizing a vision and not making a map of life, the vision is anything but visionary in the vulgar sense of the word. Her world is not a dream world; she sees, and sees acutely, what the reviewer in a hurry calls "the real world"—the world of Jane Austen and George Eliot, of *Madame Bovary* and *War and Peace* if you want to be agreeable, of Mr Wells and Mr Bennett if you want to be comprehensive. Emphatically the world of her vision is not the romantic world of Balzac, Meredith, or Hardy, nor the melodramatic of Dickens or Dostoevsky. It is a perfectly comprehensible world in which no one has the least difficulty in believing; only she sees it through coloured, or I had rather say oddly cut, glasses. Or is it we who see it through stained glass—glass stained with our ruling passions? That is a question I shall not attempt to decide. Only let me give one example of the difference between her vision and ours. When we—most of us I should say—see a pair of lovers sitting on a seat we feel—if we feel anything worth writing about—not purely the romance of the scene, or of the situation even: to some extent we share the feelings of the lovers. Our emotion, I mean, is not purely aesthetic; it is sympathetic in the strictest sense of the term. And it is because we to some extent share the excitement of the actors that, more often than not, we miss the full aesthetic import of the drama. We fail to feel some things because we feel others too much. Now Mrs Woolf sees more purely or, if you will, less passionately. At all events her emotion is not in the least self-regarding. She watches life, as it were through a cool sheet of glass: let those who dare, call the glass distorting. She knows what the lovers are saying; she knows (not feels) what they are feeling; she misses not one subtle, betraying, gesture. Assuredly, she feels the romance of the situation, but she does not share the romantic feelings of the actors.

No one could be more conscious of the romance of life. Open a book of hers almost anywhere and catch her expressing a vision of the country or, better still, of the town: not Flaubert, in that famous scene in *L'Education Sentimentale*, gives a stronger sense of the romance and excitingness of a great city than Mrs Woolf has given in half a dozen descriptions of London. But when Jacob and Florinda are together in the bedroom, and when Jacob walks out "in his dressing-gown, amiable, authoritative, beautifully healthy, like a baby after an airing," and Florinda follows "lazily stretching, yawning a little, arranging her hair in the looking-

glass," we have not had the thrill we couldn't help expecting: we have not been given a love scene as we understand it. Nothing of much consequence, we feel, has been going on behind that door; or rather, something of consequence only in relation to Mrs Flanders' letter which is lying on the table. Nor is this surprising when we reflect that it was not the love affair, but the effect of the love affair, which really interested Mrs Woolf. What was going on in the bedroom caught her imagination not as an end, but as a means. And though it is a particular Jacob and a particular Florinda that she sees, acutely, beautifully, through her wall of glass, it is in relation to a comic, poignant, familiar little tragedy, which beginning in Scarborough spreads round the world, that she sees them.

Take two other love-scenes from *Jacob's Room*—one happy, the other pathetic: Clara Durrant picking grapes and dimly realizing that she is in love with Jacob; Clara Durrant walking in the park with kind Mr Bowley and realizing that Jacob is not in love with her. Each is all over in a page or so—large print too: in the first there is more lyricism than a nineteenth century poet would have got into a hundred stanzas; and an eighteenth century novelist would have allowed himself half a volume at least to give a less devastating picture of a broken heart. Both are scenes of affecting beauty—I use these two grave words as seriously as it is possible for a notoriously frivolous person to use them: neither is passionate. Both are seen with unsurpassable precision; both are rendered by means of touch and elimination attainable only by an artist of genius; both give a vision—I use the word again and advisedly—of someone feeling intensely; but the feeling which the artist has observed and expressed she has not shared. Also, if I understand her art aright, she does not intend us to share it: she intends us to appreciate, to admire. Her emotion comes from her sense of the scene, and ours from reacting to that sense. This pure, this almost painterlike vision is Virginia Woolf's peculiarity: it is what distinguishes her from all her contemporaries.

Of course a first-rate literary artist can never really be like a painter; for it is out of words that literary artists have to create the forms that are to clothe their visions, and words carry a significance altogether different from the significance of lines and colours. Certainly Mrs Woolf's vision, and superficially her style, may remind any one, as they reminded that sound critic M Abel Chevalley, of the French impressionists—of their passion for the

beauty of life, loved for its own sake, their abhorrence of symbolism, their reputed inhumanity, technically of their little touches and divisions of tones. To our joy we are all familiar with the way in which Renoir and Claude Monet express their sense of a garden blazing in the sun. It is something which comes to them through shapes and colours, and in shapes and colours must be rendered. Now see how an artist in words deals with a similar experience.

" . . . How hot it was! So hot that even the thrush chose to hop, like a mechanical bird, in the shadow of the flowers, with long pauses between one movement and the next; instead of rambling vaguely the white butterflies danced one above another, making with their white shifting flakes the outline of a shattered marble column above the tallest flowers; the glass roofs of the palm house shone as if a whole market full of shiny green umbrellas had opened in the sun; and in the drone of the aeroplane the voice of the summer sky murmured its fierce soul. Yellow and black, pink and snow white, shapes of all these colours, men, women, and children were spotted for a second upon the horizon, and then, seeing the breadth of yellow that lay upon the grass, they wavered and sought shade beneath the trees, dissolving like drops of water in the yellow and green atmosphere, staining it faintly with red and blue. It seemed as if all gross and heavy bodies had sunk down in the heat motionless and lay huddled upon the ground, but their voices went wavering from them as if they were flames lolling from the thick waxen bodies of candles. Voices. Yes, voices. Wordless voices, breaking the silence suddenly with such depth of contentment, such passion of desire, or, in the voices of children, such freshness of surprise; breaking the silence? But there was no silence; all the time the motor omnibuses were turning their wheels and changing their gear; like a vast nest of Chinese boxes, all of wrought steel turning ceaselessly one within another the city murmured; on the top of which the voices cried aloud and the petals of myriads of flowers flashed their colours into the air."

No one, I suppose, will deny the beauty of this. No one—no one who counts at all I mean—ever has denied that Mrs Woolf chooses and uses words beautifully. But her style is sometimes accused, injuriously, of being "cultivated and intellectual," especially by people who themselves are not particularly well off for either

culture or intellect. Cultivated it is, in the sense that it reveals a finely educated mind on terms of easy acquaintance with the finest minds of other ages—a privilege reserved for those who have been at pains to learn Greek. And, perhaps, it is cultivated also in the sense that to enjoy it thoroughly a reader must himself have been well educated. It makes, no doubt, unobtrusive references to and recalls associations with things of which the unlettered dream not. Intellectual? Yes, it is intellectual, too; that is to say, words are used to affect the understanding rather than the senses. It is nearer to the last act of Figaro (though colder far—a love-scene by Virginia Woolf never put any one into the mood for a love-affair)—to the last act of Figaro which gives you an ethereal sense of a summer night's romance than to the second act of Tristan which gives you . . . Well, an over-sexed person will never appreciate the art of Virginia Woolf; nor will a fundamentally stupid. But, of course, her style is never intellectual in the sense that the style of what are called philosophic writers is: not for ideas, but for visions does she find equivalents. And, as a vision is neither an idea nor a sensation, her prose can be at once cool and coloured: no need for those deep drum notes which endear the style of Mr D. H. Lawrence to the half-educated and protect him, for all his sham science, from the charge of intellectuality. Also, her prose, though it is sometimes witty besides being fantastically humorous, is never, or rarely, pointed. In Monday or Tuesday it strikes me, as I have said, sometimes as being needlessly unfamiliar in arrangement; but, generally speaking, one may say that any difficulty which a moderately intelligent person may find in following the movements of her mind comes, not of eccentricity of expression, but of the complexity of what is being expressed. Those who call her style "bizarre" or "outrageous" are—unless merely thick-witted—making the mistake that was made by the more enlightened opponents of impressionism. They are puzzled by a technique which juxtaposes active tones, and omits those transitions which have no other function than to provide what the impressionists and Mrs Woolf and many other modern writers hold to be unnecessary bridges. For my part, I shall not deny that I am a little old for jumping, and that in literature I love a bridge, be it merely a plank. My infirmities, however, are unimportant. The important thing is that Mrs Woolf's tones are chosen deliberately, with exquisite tact, and that they form a whole which perfectly envelops her vision: that,

though some come from the imagination and others from the intellect, none flies from the object merely to the shell of her mind and thence ricochets onto the page: in a word, that her prose is not violent, but vibrant.

It is not quite true to say that the form Mrs Woolf discovered for herself and employed in *Jacob's Room* was a development of *The Mark on the Wall*. That form contained admirably well a single vision, complete in itself; what she now needed was a form to match that series of visions, glimpses and glances, stunning crashes and faint echoes, fainter perfumes and pungent stinks, which we, God forgive us, are pleased to call life. . . . "Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole."

Well, Mrs Woolf is not Sophocles, nor Matthew Arnold either; so she wanted something to hold together in a unity her series of fragmentary revelations, glimpses, glances, and scraps of glances: she wanted a thread that could be cut and knotted at both ends. Obviously, the only principle of unity in her kaleidoscopic experience was her own personality, and no great wizardry is needed to see that an equivalent for this in a work of imagination would be an imagined personality—a hero in fact. The question was, how to establish an equivalence between the various and disinterested aesthetic experience of a contemplative artist and the early life and adventures of a kinetic, not to say strapping, young gentleman. Her solution is charming and ingenious. The hero is gradually to be built up out of other people's reactions to him: other people's reactions and, I must be allowed to add, the reactions—if reactions are what they have—of places. We are gradually to infer the character of the cause from the nature of its effects on persons, places, and things. Here is impressionism with a vengeance: if the technique consisted in "little touches," the composition is a matter of "frank oppositions" and the whole will dawn on us only when the last harmony is established.

Jacob's character, Jacob's temperament, Jacob's way, Jacob's personal appearance, Jacob in fact, must always be present to hold together the bright fragments which are the author's sense of life—not of Jacob's life, but of the life in which Jacob moves. We shall find him first an active ingredient in his mother's world, then conditioning a scene or two at Cambridge, a source of feeling and speculation in a country house, in what the Sunday papers call "Bohemia," in the hearts of men and women, in London, Paris,

and Athens. And all the while Jacob is not merely affecting, he is being affected: reverse the engines, the principle of unity works just as well. Jacob is growing up, Jacob is being revealed: the men and women who love or are loved play their parts; Cambridge, Cornwall, London, Paris, and Athens play theirs; the trains, the taxicabs, the omnibuses, the changes of season, St Paul's Cathedral, jute-merchants, charwomen, the crowds crossing Waterloo Bridge, all add their quota to that vision of the young man who for one second stands revealed before he vanishes in the war for ever. Down he goes; leaving a pair of shoes to wring the hearts of a man and woman as they rummage in the characteristic disorder of Jacob's room.

The form which Mrs Woolf evolved in *Jacob's Room* gave her a freedom she had not enjoyed in either of her preceding novels. The coherence of the work is assured by the fact that the author cannot leave go of the thread without losing interest in her theme. Jacob is the sole theme; and since Jacob is to be built up gradually and so revealed, however discursive she may be in giving her sense of his surroundings she dare not cease to be for ever looking to the beginning and the end. And the reader too feels that he must keep tight hold; for in the pieces given he knows that he must see the whole, and the pieces will not be given twice. Yet, for the author, compared with the difficulties of such a novel as *Night and Day* (the difficulty of keeping each thread on a separate finger and weaving all together at the appointed moment) the difficulty of grasping this one thread firmly is child's play. For there is but one thread; and since she has no fear of losing it, she can venture to explore every corner of her vision. Anywhere, on anything, Jacob can leave his mark and so relate it to the whole. Best of all, so pervasive is the hero's temperament, so wide the sphere of his influence, and so easily can he be kept moving towards his goal—which is our enlightenment—that Mrs Woolf cannot only fly to the ends of her vision and back again, but, without stepping outside the charmed circle of an artistic unity, can, from time to time, hush the instruments of her orchestra to make, in her own voice, her own cool, humorous comment. She has found a form in which to be completely herself.

It is notorious that art conditions life at every turn. Alfred de Musset created a new type of Parisian, Rossetti and Burne-Jones a new English type. In cultivated society discussions of other

people's characters and feelings still follow the lines of a Henry James novel. People fall in love and still more fall out in ways they would never have dreamed of before the publication of *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*. And we are just beginning, not only to express, but to collect, our sense of a restaurant or of an evening party in terms of Marcel Proust. I would like to conclude an already exorbitant essay by giving Mrs Woolf a taste of her own treatment; by making a Jacob of her, and catching her in the act of affecting other people's perceptions through her own. Here is an extract from a letter which reached me not ten days ago. It was written by an exquisitely civilized lady of fashion, herself a charming but too rare author, and will give better, I think, than could any set encomium, an idea of the way in which Mrs Woolf's vision—her sense of comedy especially—is beginning to influence the most sensitive and highly civilized of her contemporaries.

" . . . and then the odd lady in the train. In spite of all she was a pleasure. I must tell you I was alone in a first-class carriage with the old thing; she was, I suppose, well off, though she had had the greatest shock of her life (in a life full of shocks) last year when the bank failed. And her luggage was curious—a hold-all on which was strapped a cardboard box, a holland parasol, and a small bag crammed with objects—chiefly packets of writing-paper, and on the top about a quarter pound of butter. This was *literally* her conversation—could Virginia have invented better? Her first remark to a maid who had come to see her off: 'Gracious! I'm not in a lavatory carriage! I shall burst before I get to Portsmouth!' Then to me later: 'Do you happen to know of rooms at Cowes? I only need a bedroom. You see I have a share-holder's ticket in the steam-packets. I go the round on one of them every day. I love the coast. The cake they provide for tea is very bad. I wrote to the manager about it last year. Do you see my finger? It's dislocated; never been set; I fell down a companion ladder last year. And would you believe it, six years ago I fell down and broke exactly the same finger on the other hand. I like seeing the royal family at Cowes; I like seeing the flags. Unfortunately I have a very bad chest. I cough almost all the time. I went twenty-eight voyages with my husband. I have been round the world. My husband is dead. So are all my children. So are my brothers and sisters; I have hardly a friend, every year another one dies. I have

cataract. I didn't know it till the other day. My oculist never told me; he said I had had quite enough trouble. I should be so glad if you would come to tea with me—if you hear of a nice flat I should be so pleased if you would let me know. May I give you my card? May I know your name? We were drawing into Chichester station—I should have said Miss Flinders, but somehow, in the confusion, I stammered 'Mrs H——' and her last words were really these—how is it that Virginia would have known? 'Not a relation of the Mrs H—— who was eaten by a tiger?' "

NOTE: The following books by Mrs Woolf have been published in America: *The Voyage Out*, *Night and Day* (George H. Doran and Company); *Monday or Tuesday*, *Jacob's Room* (Harcourt, Brace and Company).

LIFE

BY GUY CARLETON DREWRY

Men are blown
Like particles of sand
From the surf of an unknown sea
Endlessly
Along the beach of the world.

They come
With the beat of unfamiliar blood
Heavy and quick in their veins.
They come with the sea's mad monody
Muffled and strange in their ears.

They pass,
With slow lips mumbling forth in broken mimicry,
Into the blur of time.

But History has a name for each:
She squats on a towering crag
And scribbles in her thickening book
The diminutive records
Of monstrous agonies.

MISS ORMEROD¹

BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

THE trees stood massively in all their summer foliage spotted and grouped upon a meadow which sloped gently down from the big white house. There were unmistakable signs of the year 1835 both in the trees and in the sky, for modern trees are not nearly so voluminous as these ones, and the sky of those days had a kind of pale diffusion in its texture which was different from the more concentrated tone of the skies we know.

Mr George Ormerod stepped from the drawing-room window of Sedbury House, Gloucestershire, wearing a tall furry hat and white trousers strapped under his instep; he was closely, though deferentially, followed by a lady wearing a yellow-spotted dress over a crinoline, and behind her, singly and arm in arm, came nine children in nankeen jackets and long white drawers. They were going to see the water let out of a pond.

The youngest child, Eleanor, a little girl with a pale face, rather elongated features, and black hair, was left by herself in the drawing-room, a large sallow apartment with pillars, two chandeliers, for some reason enclosed in holland bags, and several octagonal tables some of inlaid wood and others of greenish malachite. At one of these little Eleanor Ormerod was seated in a high chair.

"Now Eleanor," said her mother, as the party assembled for the expedition to the pond, "here are some pretty beetles. Don't touch the glass. Don't get down from your chair, and when we come back little George will tell you all about it."

So saying, Mrs Ormerod placed a tumbler of water containing about half a dozen great water grubs in the middle of the malachite table, at a safe distance from the child, and followed her husband down the slope of old-fashioned turf towards a cluster of extremely old-fashioned sheep; opening, directly she stepped on to the terrace, a tiny parasol of bottle green silk with a bottle green fringe, though the sky was like nothing so much as a flock bed covered with a counterpane of white dimity.

¹ Founded upon the Life of Eleanor Ormerod, by Robert Wallace Murray. 1904.

The plump pale grubs gyrated slowly round and round in the tumbler. So simple an entertainment must surely soon have ceased to satisfy. Surely Eleanor would shake the tumbler, upset the grubs, and scramble down from her chair. Why, even a grown person can hardly watch those grubs crawling down the glass wall, then floating to the surface, without a sense of boredom not untinged with disgust. But the child sat perfectly still. Was it her custom, then, to be entertained by the gyrations of grubs? Her eyes were reflective, even critical. But they shone with increasing excitement. She beat one hand upon the edge of the table. What was the reason? One of the grubs had ceased to float: he lay at the bottom; the rest, descending, proceeded to tear him to pieces.

"And how has little Eleanor enjoyed herself?" asked Mr Ormerod, in rather a deep voice, stepping into the room and with a slight air of heat and of fatigue upon his face.

"Papa," said Eleanor almost interrupting her father in her eagerness to impart her observation, "I saw one of the grubs fall down and the rest came and ate him!"

"Nonsense, Eleanor," said Mr Ormerod. "You are not telling the truth." He looked severely at the tumbler in which the beetles were still gyrating as before.

"Papa, it was true!"

"Eleanor, little girls are not allowed to contradict their fathers," said Mrs Ormerod, coming in through the window, and closing her green parasol with a snap.

"Let this be a lesson," Mr Ormerod began, signing to the other children to approach, when the door opened, and the servant announced,

"Captain Fenton."

Captain Fenton "was at times thought to be tedious in his recurrence to the charge of the Scots Greys in which he had served at the battle of Waterloo."

But what is this crowd gathered round the door of the George Hotel in Chepstow? A faint cheer rises from the bottom of the hill. Up comes the mail coach, horses steaming, panels mud-splashed. "Make way! Make way!" cries the ostler and the vehicle dashes into the courtyard, pulls up sharp before the door. Down jumps the coachman, the horses are led off, and a fine team of spanking greys is harnessed with incredible speed in their stead.

Upon all this—coachman, horses, coach, and passengers—the crowd looked with gaping admiration every Wednesday evening all through the year. But to-day, the twelfth of March, 1852, as the coachman settled his rug, and stretched his hands for the reins, he observed that instead of being fixed upon him, the eyes of the people of Chepstow darted this way and that. Heads were jerked. Arms flung out. Here a hat swooped in a semi-circle. Off drove the coach almost unnoticed. As it turned the corner all the outside passengers craned their necks, and one gentleman rose to his feet and shouted, "There! there! there!" before he was bowled into eternity. It was an insect—a red-winged insect. Out the people of Chepstow poured into the high road; down the hill they ran; always the insect flew in front of them; at length by Chepstow Bridge a young man, throwing his bandanna over the blade of an oar, captured it alive and presented it to a highly respectable elderly gentleman who now came puffing upon the scene—Samuel Budge, doctor, of Chepstow. By Samuel Budge it was presented to Miss Ormerod; by her sent to a professor at Oxford. And he, declaring it "a fine specimen of the rose underwinged locust" added the gratifying information that it "was the first of the kind to be captured so far west."

And so, at the age of twenty-four Miss Eleanor Ormerod was thought the proper person to receive the gift of a locust.

When Eleanor Ormerod appeared at archery meetings and croquet tournaments young men pulled their whiskers and young ladies looked grave. It was so difficult to make friends with a girl who could talk of nothing but black beetles and earwigs—"Yes, that's what she likes, isn't it queer?—Why, the other day Ellen, Mama's maid, heard from Jane, who's under-kitchenmaid at Sedbury House, that Eleanor tried to boil a beetle in the kitchen saucepan and he wouldn't die, and swam round and round, and she got into a terrible state and sent the groom all the way to Gloucester to fetch chloroform—all for an insect my dear!—and she gives the cottagers shillings to collect beetles for her—and she spends hours in her bedroom cutting them up—and she climbs trees like a boy to find wasps' nests—oh, you can't think what they don't say about her in the village—for she does look so odd, dressed anyhow, with that great big nose and those bright little eyes, so like a caterpillar herself, I always think—but of course she's won-

derfully clever and very good, too, both of them. Georgiana has a lending library for the cottagers, and Eleanor never misses a service—but there she is—that short pale girl in the large bonnet. Do go and talk to her, for I'm sure I'm too stupid, but you'd find plenty to say—" But neither Fred nor Arthur, Henry nor William found anything to say—

" . . . probably the lecturer would have been equally well pleased had none of her own sex put in an appearance."

This comment upon a lecture delivered in the year 1889 throws some light, perhaps, upon archery meetings in the 'fifties.

It being nine o'clock on a February night some time about 1862 all the Ormerods were in the library; Mr Ormerod making architectural designs at a table; Mrs Ormerod lying on a sofa making pencil drawings upon grey paper; Eleanor making a model of a snake to serve as a paper weight; Georgiana making a copy of the font in Tidenham Church; some of the others examining books with beautiful illustrations; while at intervals someone rose, unlocked the wire book case, took down a volume for instruction or entertainment, and perused it beneath the chandelier.

Mr Ormerod required complete silence for his studies. His word was law, even to the dogs, who, in the absence of their master, instinctively obeyed the eldest male person in the room. Some whispered colloquy there might be between Mrs Ormerod and her daughters—

"The draught under the pew was really worse than ever this morning, Mama—"

"And we could only unfasten the latch in the chancel because Eleanor happened to have her ruler with her—"

"—hm—m—m. Dr Armstrong—Hm—m—m—"

"—Anyhow things aren't as bad with us as they are at Kinghampton. They say Mrs Briscoe's Newfoundland dog follows her right up to the chancel rails when she takes the sacrament—"

"And the turkey is still sitting on its eggs in the pulpit."

"—The period of incubation for a turkey is between three and four weeks"—said Eleanor thoughtfully looking up from her cast of the snake and forgetting, in the interest of her subject, to speak in a whisper.

"Am I to be allowed no peace in my own house?" Mr Ormerod

exclaimed angrily, rapping with his ruler on the table, upon which Mrs Ormerod half shut one eye and squeezed a little blob of Chinese white on to her high light, and they remained silent until the servants came in, when everyone, with the exception of Mrs Ormerod, fell on their knees. For she, poor lady, suffered from a chronic complaint and left the family party for ever a year or two later, when the green sofa was moved into the corner, and the drawings given to her nieces in memory of her. But Mr Ormerod went on making architectural drawings at nine p.m. every night (save on Sundays when he read a sermon) until he too lay upon the green sofa, which had not been used since Mrs Ormerod lay there, but still looked much the same. "We deeply felt the happiness of ministering to his welfare," Miss Ormerod wrote, "for he would not hear of our leaving him for even twenty-four hours and he objected to visits from my brothers excepting occasionally for a short time. They, not being used to the gentle ways necessary for an aged invalid, worried him . . . the Thursday following, the 9th October, 1873, he passed gently away at the mature age of eighty-seven years." Oh, graves in country churchyards—respectable burials—mature old gentlemen—D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., F.S.A.—lots of letters come after your names, but lots of women are buried with you!

There remained the Hessian Fly and the Bot—mysterious insects! Not, one would have thought, among God's most triumphant creations, and yet—if you see them under a microscope!—the Bot, obese, globular, obscene; the Hessian, booted, spurred, whiskered, cadaverous. Next slip under the glass an innocent grain; behold it pock-marked and livid; or take this strip of hide, and note those odious pullulating lumps—well, what does the landscape look like then?

The only palatable object for the eye to rest on in acres of England is a lump of Paris Green. But English people won't use microscopes; you can't make them use Paris Green either—or if they do, they let it drip. Dr Ritzema Bos is a great stand-by. For they won't take a woman's word. And indeed, though for the sake of the Ox Warble one must stretch a point, there are matters, questions of stock infestation, things one has to go into—things a lady doesn't even like to see, much less discuss in print—"these, I say, I intend to leave entirely to the Veterinary surgeons. My

brother—oh, he's dead now—a very good man—for whom I collected wasps' nests—lived at Brighton and wrote about wasps—he, I say, wouldn't let me learn anatomy, never liked me to do more than take sections of teeth."

Ah, but Eleanor, the Bot and the Hessian have more power over you than Mr Edward Ormerod himself. Under the microscope you clearly perceive that these insects have organs, orifices, excrement; they do, most emphatically, copulate. Escorted on the one side by the Bos or Warble, on the other by the Hessian Fly, Miss Ormerod advanced stately, if slowly, into the open. Never did her features show more sublime than when lit up by the candour of her avowal. "This is excrement; these, though Ritzema Bos is positive to the contrary, are the generative organs of the male. I've proved it." Upon her head the hood of Edinburgh most fitly descended; pioneer of purity even more than of Paris Green.

"If you're sure I'm not in your way," said Miss Lipscomb unstrapping her paint box and planting her tripod firmly in the path, "—I'll try to get a picture of those lovely hydrangeas against the sky—What flowers you have in Penzance!"

The market gardener crossed his hands on his hoe, slowly twined a piece of bass round his finger, looked at the sky, said something about the sun, also about the prevalence of lady artists, and then, with a nod of his head, observed sententiously that it was to a lady that he owed everything he had.

"Ah?" said Miss Lipscomb, flattered, but already much occupied with her composition.

"A lady with a queer sounding name," said Mr Pascoe, "but that's the lady I've called my little girl after—I don't think there's such another in Christendom."

Of course it was Miss Ormerod, equally of course Miss Lipscomb was the sister of Miss Ormerod's family doctor; and so she did no sketching that morning, but left with a handsome bunch of grapes instead—for every flower had drooped, ruin had stared him in the face—he had written, not believing one bit what they told him—to the lady with the queer name, back there came a book "In-ju-rious In-sects," with the page turned down, perhaps by her very hand, also a letter which he kept at home under the clock, but he knew every word by heart, since it was due to what she said there that

he wasn't a ruined man—and the tears ran down his face and Miss Lipscomb, clearing a space on the lodging-house table, wrote the whole story to her brother.

"The prejudice against Paris Green certainly seems to be dying down," said Miss Ormerod when she read it.—"But now," she sighed rather heavily being no longer young and much afflicted with the gout, "now it's the sparrows."

One might have thought that *they* would have left her alone—innocent dirt-grey birds, taking more than their share of the breakfast crumbs, otherwise inoffensive. But once you look through a microscope—once you see the Hessian and the Bot as they really are—there's no peace for an elderly lady pacing her terrace on a fine May morning. For example, why, when there are crumbs enough for all, do only the sparrows get them? Why not swallows or martins? Why—oh, here come the servants for prayers—

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. . . For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen—"

"The Times ma'am—"

"Thank you, Dixon. . . The Queen's birthday! We must drink her Majesty's health in the old white port, Dixon. Home Rule—tut—tut—tut. All that madman Gladstone. My father would have thought the world was coming to an end, and I'm not at all sure that it isn't. I must talk to Dr Lipscomb—"

Yet all the time in the tail of her eye she saw myriads of sparrows, and retiring to the study proclaimed in a pamphlet of which 36,000 copies were gratuitously distributed that the sparrow is a pest.

"When he eats an insect," she said to her sister Georgiana, "which isn't often, it's one of the few insects that one wants to keep—one of the very few," she added with a touch of acidity natural to one whose investigations have all tended to the discredit of the insect race.

"But there'll be some very unpleasant consequences to face," she concluded—"Very unpleasant indeed."

Happily the port was now brought in, the servants assembled; and Miss Ormerod, rising to her feet, gave the toast "Her Blessed Majesty." She was extremely loyal, and moreover she liked nothing better than a glass of her father's old white port. She kept his pigtail, too, in a box.

Such being her disposition it went hard with her to analyse the sparrow's crop, for the sparrow she felt, symbolizes something of the homely virtue of English domestic life, and to proclaim it stuffed with deceit was disloyal to much that she, and her fathers before her, held dear. Sure enough the clergy—the Rev. J. E. Walker—denounced her for her brutality; “God Save the Sparrow!” exclaimed the *Animal's Friend*; and Miss Carrington, of the Humanitarian League, replied in a leaflet described by Miss Ormerod as “spirity, discourteous, and inaccurate.”

“Well,” said Miss Ormerod to her sister, “it did me no harm before to be threatened to be shot at, also hanged in effigy, and other little attentions.”

“Still it was very disagreeable, Eleanor—more disagreeable I believe, to me than to you,” said Georgiana. Soon Georgiana died. She had however finished the beautiful series of insect diagrams at which she worked every morning in the dining-room and they were presented to Edinburgh University. But Eleanor was never the same woman after that.

Dear forest fly—flour moths—weevils—grouse and cheese flies—beetles—foreign correspondents—eel worms—ladybirds—wheat midges—resignation from the Royal Agricultural Society—gall mites—boot beetles—Announcement of honorary degree to be conferred—feelings of appreciation and anxiety—paper on wasps—last annual report warnings of serious illness—proposed pension—gradual loss of strength—Finally Death.

That is life, so they say.

“It does no good to keep people waiting for an answer,” sighed Miss Ormerod, “though I don't feel as able as I did since that unlucky accident at Waterloo. And no one realizes what the strain of the work is—often I'm the only lady in the room, and the gentlemen so learned, though I've always found them most helpful, most generous in every way. But I'm growing old, Miss Hartwell, that's what it is. That's what led me to be thinking of this difficult matter of flour infestation in the middle of the road so that I didn't see the horse until he had poked his nose into my ear. . . . Then there's this nonsense about a pension. What could possess Mr Barron to think of such a thing? I should feel inexpressibly lowered if I accepted a pension. Why, I don't altogether like writing L.L.D. after my name, though Georgie would have liked it.

All I ask is to be let go on in my own quiet way. Now where is Messrs Langridge's sample? We must take that first. 'Gentlemen, I have examined your sample and find . . .'

"If any one deserves a thorough good rest it's you, Miss Ormerod," said Dr Lipscomb, who had grown a little white over the ears. "I should say the farmers of England ought to set up a statue to you, bring offerings of corn and wine—make you a kind of Goddess, eh—what was her name?"

"Not a very shapely figure for a Goddess," said Miss Ormerod with a little laugh. "I should enjoy the wine though. You're not going to cut me off my one glass of port surely?"

"You must remember," said Dr Lipscomb, shaking his head, "how much your life means to others."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Miss Ormerod, pondering a little. "To be sure, I've chosen my epitaph. 'She introduced Paris Green into England,' and there might be a word or two about the Hessian fly—that, I do believe, was a good piece of work."

"No need to think about epitaphs yet," said Dr Lipscomb.

"Our lives are in the hands of the Lord," said Miss Ormerod simply.

Dr Lipscomb bent his head and looked out of the window. Miss Ormerod remained silent.

"English entomologists care little or nothing for objects of practical importance," she exclaimed suddenly. "Take this question of flour infestation—I can't say how many grey hairs that hasn't grown me."

"Figuratively speaking, Miss Ormerod," said Dr Lipscomb, for her hair was still raven black.

"Well, I do believe all good work is done in concert," Miss Ormerod continued. "It is often a great comfort to me to think that."

"It's beginning to rain," said Dr Lipscomb. "How will your enemies like that, Miss Ormerod?"

"Hot or cold, wet or dry, insects always flourish!" cried Miss Ormerod energetically sitting up in bed.

"Old Miss Ormerod is dead," said Mr Drummond, opening *The Times* on Saturday, July 20th, 1901.

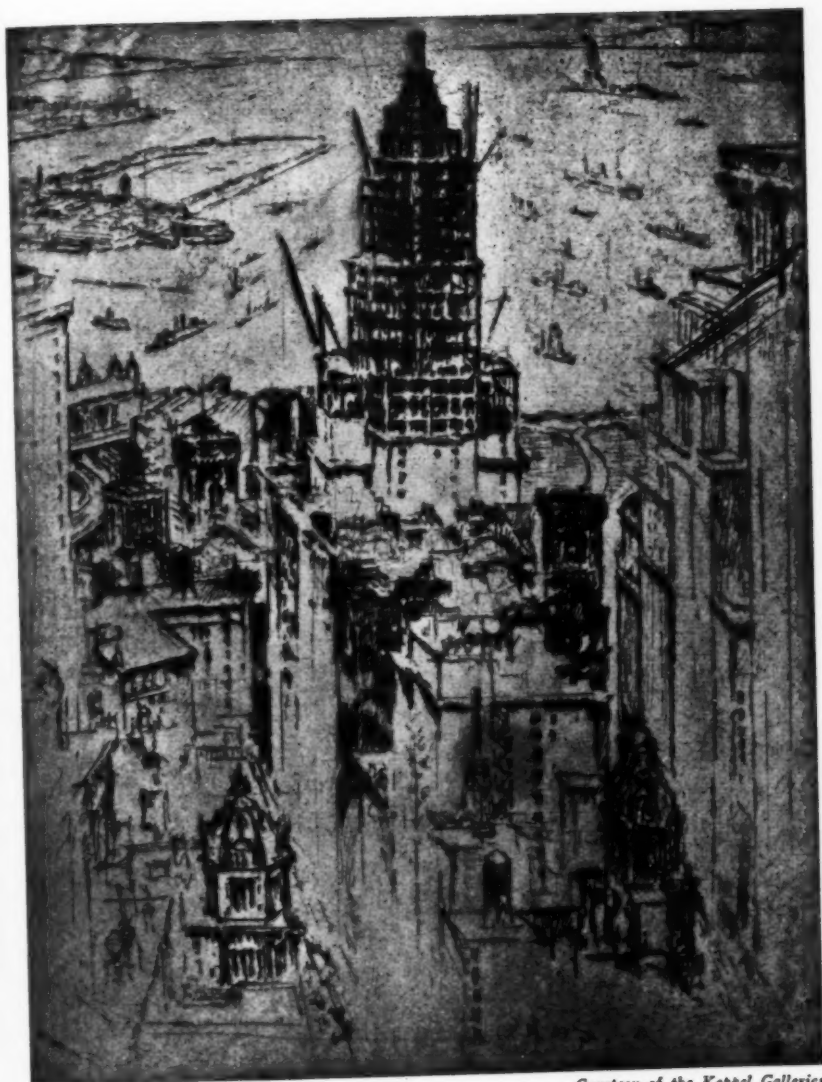
"Old Miss Ormerod?" asked Mrs Drummond.



Courtesy of the Keppel Galleries

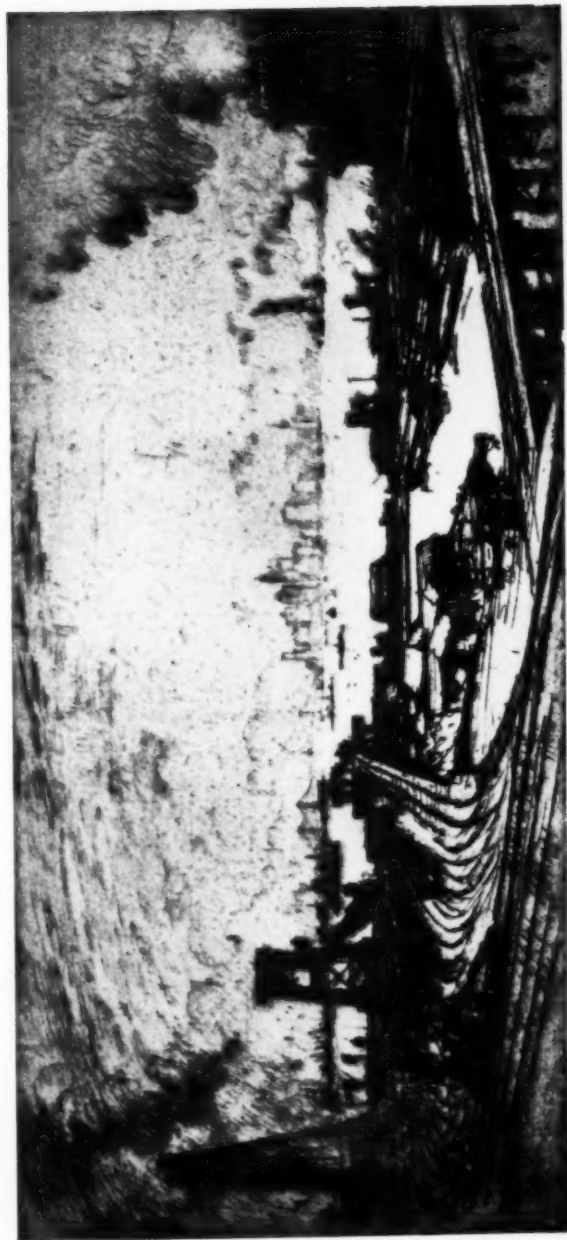
STANDARD OIL BUILDING. BY JOSEPH PENNELL





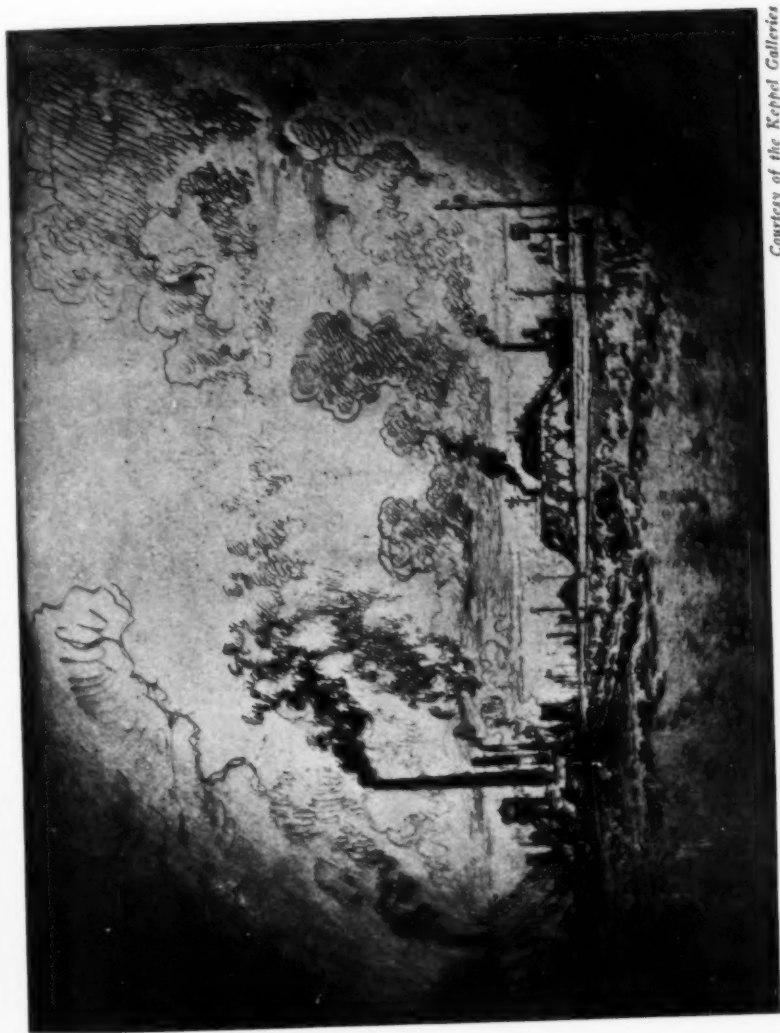
Courtesy of the Keppel Galleries

THE LATEST TOWER. BY JOSEPH PENNELL



COAL WHARFS, STATEN ISLAND: NO. 1. BY JOSEPH PENNELL

Courtesy of the Keppel Galleries



LANDSCAPE NEAR VALENCIENNES. BY JOSEPH PENNELL

Courtesy of the Kewpie Galleries

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AN OCTOPUS

BY MARIANNE MOORE

of ice. Deceptively reserved and flat,
it lies "in grandeur and in mass"
beneath a sea of shifting snow dunes;
dots of cyclamen red and maroon on its clearly defined pseudopodia
made of glass that will bend—a much needed invention—
comprising twenty-eight icefields from fifty to five hundred feet
thick,
of unimagined delicacy.
"Picking periwinkles from the cracks"
or killing prey with the concentric crushing rigour of the python,
it hovers forward "spider fashion
on its arms" misleadingly like lace;
its "ghosly pallor changing
to the green metallic tinge of an anemone starred pool."
The firtrees in "the magnitude of their root systems,"
rise aloof from these manoeuvres "creepy to behold"—
austere specimens of our American royal families,
"each like the shadow of the one beside it.
The rock seems frail compared with their dark energy of life,"
its vermilion and onyx and manganese blue interior expensiveness
left at the mercy of the weather;
"stained transversely by iron where the water drips down";
recognized by its plants and its animals.
Completing a circle,
you have been deceived into thinking that you have progressed,
under the polite needles of the larches
"hung to filter not to intercept the sunlight"—
met by tightly wattled spruce twigs
"conformed to an edge like clipped cypress
as if no branch could penetrate the cold beyond its company";
and dumps of gold and silver ore enclosing The Goat's Mirror—
that lady-fingerlike depression in the shape of the left human foot,
which prejudices you in favour of itself

before you have had time to see the others;
 its indigo, pea-green, blue-green, and turquoise,
 from a hundred to two hundred feet deep,
 "merging in irregular patches in the middle lake
 where like gusts of a storm,
 obliterating the shadows of the firtrees, the wind makes lanes of
 ripples."

What spot could have merits of equal importance
 for bears, elk, deer, wolves, goats, and ducks?
 Preempted by their ancestors,
 this is the property of the exacting porcupine,
 and of the rat "slipping along to its burrow in the swamp
 or pausing on high ground to smell the heather";
 of "thoughtful beavers
 making drains which seem the work of careful men with shovels,"
 and of the bears inspecting unexpectedly
 ant hills and berry bushes.

Composed of calcium gems and alabaster pillars,
 topaz, tourmaline crystals, and amethyst quartz,
 their den is somewhere else, concealed in the confusion
 of "blue stone forests thrown together with marble and jasper and
 agate

as if whole quarries had been dynamited."

And farther up, in stag-at-bay position
 as a scintillating fragment of these terrible stalagmites,
 stands the goat,
 its eye fixed on the waterfall which never seems to fall—
 an endless skein swayed by the wind,
 immune to force of gravity in the perspective of the peaks.

A special antelope
 acclimated to "grottoes from which issue penetrating draughts
 which make you wonder why you came,"

it stands its ground
 on cliffs the colour of the clouds, of petrified white vapour—
 black feet, eyes, nose, and horns engraved on dazzling icefields,
 the ermine body on the crystal peak;
 the sun kindling its shoulders to maximum heat like acetylene,
 dyeing them white;
 upon this antique pedestal—

"a mountain with those graceful lines which prove it a volcano,"
its top a complete cone like Fujiyama's
till an explosion blew it off.

Maintaining many minds, distinguished by a beauty
of which "the visitor dare never fully speak at home
for fear of being stoned as an impostor,"

Big Snow Mountain is the home of a diversity of creatures:
those who "have lived in hotels

but who now live in camps—who prefer to";
the mountain guide evolving from the trapper,
"in two pairs of trousers, the outer one older,
wearing slowly away from the feet to the knees";
"the nine-striped chipmunk
running with unmammal-like agility along a log";

the water ouzel
with "its passion for rapids and high pressured falls,"
building under the arch of some tiny Niagara;
the white-tailed ptarmigan "in winter solid white,
feeding on heather bells and alpine buckwheat";
and the eleven eagles of the west,
"fond of the spring fragrance and the winter colours,"
used to the unegoistic action of the glaciers
and "several hours of frost every midsummer night."

They make a nice appearance, don't they,
happy seeing nothing?

Perched on treacherous lava and pumice—
those unadjusted chimney-pots and cleavers
which stipulate "names and addresses of persons to notify
in case of disaster—"

they hear the roar of ice and supervise the water
winding slowly through the cliffs,
the road "climbing like the thread
which forms the groove around a snail-shell,
doubling back and forth until where snow begins, it ends."

No "deliberate wide-eyed wistfulness" is here
among the boulders sunk in ripples and white water
where "when you hear the best wild music of the forest
it is sure to be a badger,"

the victim on some slight observatory,

of "a struggle between curiosity and caution,"
 inquiring what has scared it:
 a stone from the moraine descending in leaps,
 another badger, or the spotted ponies with "glass eyes,"
 brought up on frosty grass and flowers
 and rapid draughts of ice water.
 Instructed none knows how, to climb the mountain,
 by "business men who as totemic scenery of Canada,
 require for recreation,
 three hundred and sixty-five holidays in the year,"
 these conspicuously spotted little horses are peculiar,
 hard to discern among the birch trees, ferns, and lily pads,
 avalanche lilies, Indian paintbrushes,
 bears' ears and kittentails,
 and miniature cavalcades of chlorophyllless fungi
 magnified in profile on the mossbeds like moonstones in the water;
 the cavalcade of calico competing
 with the original American "menagerie of styles"
 among the white flowers of the rhododendron surmounting rigid
 leaves
 upon which moisture works its alchemy,
 transmuting verdure into onyx.
 Larkspur, blue pincushions, blue peas, and lupin;
 white flowers with white, and red with red;
 the blue ones "growing close together
 so that patches of them look like blue water in the distance:"
 this arrangement of colours
 as in Persian designs of hard stones with enamel,
 forms a pleasing equation—
 a diamond outside; and inside, a white dot;
 on the outside, a ruby; inside, a red dot;
 black spots balanced with black
 in the woodlands where fires have run over the ground—
 separated by aspens, cats' paws, and woolly sunflowers,
 fireweed, asters, and Goliath thistles
 "flowering at all altitudes as multiplicitous as barley,"
 like pink sapphires in the pavement of the glistening plateau.
 Inimical to "bristling, puny, swearing men
 equipped with saws and axes,"

this treacherous glass mountain
 admires gentians, ladyslippers, harebells, mountain dryads,
 and "Calypso, the goat flower—
 that greenish orchid fond of snow"—
 anomalously nourished upon shelving glacial ledges
 where climbers have not gone or have gone timidly,
 "the one resting his nerves while the other advanced,"
 on this volcano, with the bluejay her principal companion.
 "Hopping stiffly on sharp feet" like miniature icehacks—
 "secretive, with a look of wisdom and distinction, but a villain,
 fond of human society or the crumbs that go with it,"
 he knows no Greek, the pastime of Calypso and Ulysses—
 "that pride producing language,"
 in which "rashness is rendered innocuous, and error exposed
 by the collision of knowledge with knowledge."
 "Like happy souls in Hell,"
 enjoying mental difficulties,
 the golden grasshoppers of Greece
 amused themselves with delicate behaviour
 because it was "so noble and so fair";
 not practised in adapting their intelligence
 to eagle traps and snowshoes,
 to alpenstocks and other toys contrived by those
 "alive to the advantage of invigorating pleasures."
 Bows, arrows, oars, and paddles for which trees provide the wood,
 in new countries are more eloquent than elsewhere—
 augmenting evidence for the assertion
 that essentially humane,
 "the forest affords wood for dwellings and by its beauty stimulates
 the moral vigour of its citizens."
 The Greeks liked smoothness, distrusting what was back
 of what could not be clearly seen,
 resolving with benevolent conclusiveness,
 "complexities which will remain complexities
 as long as the world lasts";
 ascribing what we clumsily call happiness,
 to "an accident or a quality,
 a spiritual substance or the soul itself,
 an act or a disposition or a habit

or a habit infused to which the soul has been persuaded,
or something distinct from a habit, a power—"

such power as Adam had and we are still devoid of.

"Emotionally sensitive, their hearts were hard";

their wisdom was remote

from that of these odd oracles of cool official sarcasm,

upon this game preserve

where "guns, nets, seines, traps, and explosives,

hired vehicles, gambling, and intoxicants are prohibited,

disobedient persons being summarily removed

and not allowed to return without permission in writing."

It is self evident

that it is frightful to have everything afraid of one;

that one must do as one is told

and eat "rice, prunes, dates, raisins, hardtack, and tomatoes"

if one would "conquer the main peak" of Mount Takoma—

this fossil flower concise without a shiver,

intact when it is cut,

damned for its sacrosanct remoteness—

like Henry James "damned by the public for decorum";

not decorum, but restraint;

it was the love of doing hard things

that rebuffed and wore them out—a public out of sympathy with
neatness.

Neatness of finish! Neatness of finish!

Relentless accuracy is the nature of this octopus

with its capacity for fact.

"Creeping slowly as with meditated stealth,

its arms seeming to approach from all directions,"

it receives one under winds that "tear the snow to bits

and hurl it like a sandblast,

shearing off twigs and loose bark from the trees."

Is tree the word for these strange things

"flat on the ground like vines"?

some "bent in a half circle with branches on one side

suggesting dustbrushes, not trees;

some finding strength in union, forming little stunted groves,

their flattened mats of branches shrunk in trying to escape"

from the hard mountain "planed by ice and polished by the
wind"—

the white volcano with no weather side;
the lightning flashing at its base,
rain falling in the valleys, and snow falling on the peak—
the glassy octopus symmetrically pointed,
its claw cut by the avalanche
"with a sound like the crack of a rifle,
in a curtain of powdered snow launched like a waterfall."

THE DOWNFALL OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

BY OSWALD SPENGLER

Translated From the German by Kenneth Burke

VII

THE scheme "antiquity, middle ages, modernity" is a creation of the Gnostics, transmitted by the Church—and thus is the result of the Semitic, and especially Syrian-Jewish cosmic attitudes during the Roman Empire.

Within the very narrow boundaries which form the spiritual proclivity of this significant conception, it arose with perfect justice. Here neither Hindu nor even Egyptian history falls within the sphere of observation. Universal history means for these thinkers a single, highly dramatic act whose stage was the landscape between Hellas and Persia. This gives expression to the strictly dualistic cosmic feeling of the Oriental—not polaric as in the metaphysics of the time with its opposition of soul and mind, but periodic,¹ seen as catastrophe, as the turning-point of two ages, between the creation of the world and its exhaustion—while all factors were left out of account which were not established by Ancient literature on the one hand or the Bible on the other. This cosmogony offers as "antiquity" and "modernity" the then tangible contrast between heathen and Christian, Ancient and Oriental, statue and dogma, nature and mind in a *temporal* aspect, as the process of one overcoming the other. The historic transition bears the religious marks of a redemption. This outlook was undoubtedly narrow, and rested on thoroughly provincial attitudes; yet it was logical and self-contained, and while it adhered to the people and the landscape of that time, it was not capable of any *natural* extension.

This view did not develop a tendency towards movement until the annexation of a third age (*our* "modernity") on Occidental

¹ In the New Testament the polar aspect is represented more by the dialectics of the apostle Paul, the periodic by the Apocalypse.

soil. The Oriental original was *static*, a closed antithesis vacillating in the balance, with a single past divine act as centre. This sterilized fragment of history was taken up and carried on by an entirely new type of man; and without any one's becoming aware of anything bizarre in such a change, it was now suddenly spun out into the form of a *line* which led from Homer or Adam—the possibilities to-day are enriched by the Indo-Germans, the stone age, and the ape men—over Jerusalem, Rome, Florence, and Paris, either up or down, in accordance with the personal taste of the historian, thinker, or artist who interpreted the tripartite vision with unlimited freedom.

To the *complementary* concepts Paganism and Christianity—both understood as successive, as ages—there was added the *concluding* one of a “modernity” which, comically enough, does not on its part allow a continuation of the process, and after having been repeatedly “stretched” since the Crusades, seems incapable of a further extension. Without saying so explicitly, people were of the opinion that here beyond antiquity and the middle ages something definitive was beginning, a third empire harbouring somehow a fulfilment, a culmination, an aim, which everyone from the scholastics up to the socialists of our day claimed that he alone had recognized. This outlook upon the course of things was both comfortable and flattering to its author. The spirit of the Occident had been quite simply interchanged with the meaning of the universe. Out of a spiritual necessity great thinkers thus made a metaphysical virtue, in that they took this scheme, sanctioned by the *consensus omnium*, as the basis of a philosophy, and looked to God as the author of each “world plan.” The mystical trinity of ages had something highly seductive to metaphysical taste. Herder called history an education of the human race, Kant an evolution of the concept of freedom, Hegel a self-development of the world spirit, and so on. But the historical faculty has already exhausted itself in projects of this sort.

The idea of a third empire was already known to the Abbot Joachim of Floris (died 1202) who related the three phases to the symbols of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Lessing, who frequently characterizes his times simply as a later phase of the Ancients, borrowed the idea for his *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (with the stages of childhood, youth, and manhood) from

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the doctrines of the fourteenth-century mystics. And Ibsen, who treated it thoroughly in his drama *Emperor and Galilean* (where the Gnostic attitude protrudes directly, in the figure of the sorcerer *Maximo*) did not advance a single step farther in his well-known Stockholm Address of 1887. Apparently it is a requirement of the Western European ego that it should erect its own presence into a kind of conclusion.

But it is a completely untenable procedure to interpret universal history by giving free reign to one's own political, religious, or social convictions, and letting the three phases, which one dares not question, move in the direction of one's own standpoint, postulating intellectual maturity, or humanity, or the happiness of the majority, or economic evolution, or enlightenment, or race freedom, or the subjugation of nature, or the scientific attitude, and so forth, as the absolute criterion for judging thousands of years which, one shows, failed to understand or attain the proper thing, whereas in reality they simply wanted something different than we do. "In life we have to do quite plainly with life, and not with any result of it"—that is a saying of Goethe's which should be opposed to all inane attempts to solve the secret of historical form by a *programme*.

The same picture is drawn by the historians of every single art and science, not forgetting political economy and philosophy. Here we see painting from the Egyptians (or cave men) up to the impressionists, music from the blind singer of Homer up to Bayreuth, social organization from the lake dwellers up to socialism—each conceived in a linear progression to which is imputed some permanent tendency, without any consideration of the possibility that arts possess a limited lifetime, that they are bound to one landscape and one definite type of man as a specific expression, and that these collective histories are merely a superficial accumulation of a number of unrelated phenomena, of isolated arts which have nothing in common except their name and some elements of technical execution.

This conception is not without its comic aspect. In every other field of living nature we claim the right to deduce from the phenomenon itself (whether empirically or by an intuitive grasp of the inner character) the form which underlies its existence. We know that the phenomena in the life of an animal or a plant permit

us to draw conclusions about the phenomena of related species, that everything alive contains a mysterious arrangement which has nothing to do with law, causality, number—and from this we derive the morphological consequences. Only here, where we are dealing with man himself, we accept without question the historic form of his existence which was laid down at one time or other, and we force the facts, for better or worse, into the preconceived scheme. If they don't fit—it is so much the harder on the facts. We treat them with disdain, like the history of the Chinese; or we don't even give them a glance, like the Maya culture. They have "contributed nothing to the structure of universal history"—a charming expression.

Of every organism we know that the speed, form, and duration of its life and of each individual manifestation of that life are determined. No one will expect of a thousand-year-old oak that it be only now in a position to begin the true course of its development. No one expects of a caterpillar which he sees growing daily that it may possibly continue this for a couple of years. Here everyone has with absolute certainty the feeling of a *limit*, which is identical with the feeling for organic forms. But where the history of higher humanity is involved, there is a boundlessly trivial optimism with reference to the future. Here all psychological and physiological experience drops away, so that everyone discovers in the random present some "preliminary" to an especially remarkable rectilinear "further development"—because he wishes it. Here unlimited possibilities—never a natural end—are reckoned with; and out of each passing situation a highly naïve continuous structure is projected.

But "humanity" has no aim, no ideal, no plan, any more than the genus of butterflies or of orchids has an aim. "Humanity" is an empty word. If one banishes this phantom from the sphere of history's form-problems, he will see emerging an astonishing wealth of *real* forms. Here is an incommensurable fulness, depth, and movement of the living, which has been concealed heretofore by a phrase, by a barren scheme, by personal "ideals." Instead of the monotonous vision of rectilinear universal history which one can maintain only by shutting his eyes to the preponderant number of facts, I see the phenomenon of a multiplicity of mighty cultures: these flourish with a primeval power in the midst of a fos-

tering landscape to which each of them is rigidly bound for the entire course of its existence; each of them impresses its *own* form upon its materials and its mankind; and each of them has its *own* idea, its *own* passions, its *own* life, will, feeling, its *own* death. Here there are colours, lights, movements which no intellectual eye has as yet discovered. There are flourishing and aging cultures, peoples, languages, truths, gods, landscapes, just as there are young and old oaks and pines, blossoms, twigs, leaves—but there is no aging “humanity.” Each culture has its own possibilities of expression, which sprout, ripen, wither, and never return. There are many modes of plastic art, painting, mathematics, physics, which are at bottom entirely different from one another: while each is of limited duration, each is enclosed within itself, just as every species of plant has its own blossoms and fruits, its own type of growth and decline. These cultures, living organisms of the highest rank, grow up in exalted aimlessness, like flowers of the field. They belong, like plants and animals, to the living nature of Goethe, not to the dead nature of Newton. I see in universal history the vision of an eternal formation and transformation, a marvellous rising and passing of organic forms. But the standard historian sees it as a tapeworm which is the “preliminary” to inexhaustible epochs.

Meanwhile the combination “antiquity, middle ages, modernity” has finally lost its efficacy. As smugly narrow and inane as it was, yet it represented the only concept we possessed which had some semblance of philosophy; and to this is due whatever philosophic content there is in the literary systematizations which are offered as universal history. But the outside number of centuries which could be encompassed by this scheme has already been reached. The traditional outlook begins breaking up into an unmanageable chaos, owing to the rapid accumulation of historic material, particularly material which falls beyond these classifications. Every historian who is not totally blind sees and appreciates this; but he clings desperately to the only scheme he knows, in order not to be wholly submerged. The term “middle ages,” coined in 1667 by Professor Horn at Leyden, must cover to-day an amorphous, continually expanding mass which is defined purely by negation and by those elements which afford no pretext for inclusion under the two other passably ordered complexes. The uncertain treatment and evaluation of Late Persian, Arabic, and Russian history

are examples of this. Above all, the fact can no longer be concealed that this ostensible history of the world actually confines itself at the beginning to the region of the eastern Mediterranean; and later, after the migrations, with a sudden change of scene to West Central Europe, it centres on a purely local event which is important for us alone and is thus greatly magnified, while Arabian culture is already left out of account. In all simplicity Hegel declared that he would ignore the peoples which did not fit into his system of history. But that was an honourable admission of the assumptions in method without which *no* historian arrived at his goal. To verify this one need only examine the procedure of all historical works. Indeed it is a question of scientific tact to-day which of the historic phenomena one *seriously* includes, and which not. Ranke is a good example of this.

VIII

We think to-day in geographical divisions. Only our philosophers and historians have not yet learned this. What can thoughts and perspectives which are offered with a claim to universal validity mean to us when their horizon does not reach beyond the intellectual atmosphere of the Western European?

Consider in this respect our best books. When Plato speaks of mankind, he means the Hellenes in contrast to the barbarians. That corresponds thoroughly with the anhistoric style of Ancient life and thought, and by this one assumption leads to consistent results. But when Kant philosophizes, on ethical ideals for instance, he asserts the validity of his propositions for people of all kinds and types. But he does not say this expressly, because it is all too self-evident to him and his readers. In his aesthetics he does not formulate the principles of the art of Pheidias or the art of Rembrandt, but of art in general. Yet what he establishes as the necessary forms of thought are simply the necessary forms of Occidental thought. A glance at Aristotle and his basically different results should have indicated that here a mind is reflecting on itself which is not less clear, but differently constituted. The cosmic solipsism¹ which underlies Kant's critique of reason (every theory, no matter how abstract, is the expression of a cosmic feel-

¹ It is already latent in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzeval and Dante's Divina Commedia.

ing) and which makes it the truest of all systems for the Western European, is unintelligible to Russian philosophers like Soloviev; and for the modern Chinese and Arabian, with their entirely different types of intellect, Kant's doctrine has merely the value of a curiosity.

That is what the Occidental thinker lacks, and what *he of all people* should not lack: the insight into the historic-relative character of his results, which are the expression of *this one* existence and *this one only*; the knowledge of the necessary limitations of validity; the conviction that his "impregnable truths" and "eternal observations" are true only for him and eternal only in his cosmic aspect, and that it is his duty to attempt going beyond these things and thinking of what the man of other cultures has uttered with the same certainty. This is required for the *completion* of a philosophy of the future. Through this alone we can understand the form-language of history, of the *living* world. Here there is nothing permanent and universal. Let us no longer mention the forms of *all* thought, the principle of *the* tragic, the task of *the* state. Universal validity is always the illogical step from oneself to another.

The picture becomes much more serious when we turn to the thinkers of Western European modernity since Schopenhauer, at that stage when the main emphasis of philosophy shifts from the abstract and systematic to the practical and ethical, and the problem of knowledge is replaced by the problem of life (the will to live, to power, to act). Here the subject of observation is no longer the ideal abstraction "man" as with Kant, but the real man who inhabits the earth's surface in historical times, grouped racially as a primitive or as a man of culture. And it is ridiculous when there too the scope of the highest concepts is confined by the scheme "antiquity, middle ages, modernity" and the local limitations which go with it. But that is the case.

Let us consider the historical horizon of Nietzsche. His ideas of decadence, nihilism, the transvaluation of all values, conceptions which are deeply rooted in the character of the Occidental civilization and are thoroughly vital to its analysis—what was the basis of their formulation? Romans and Greeks, Renaissance, and European present, with an added hasty side-glance at the (misunderstood) Hindu philosophy; in short: antiquity, middle ages,

modernity. Strictly speaking, he never went beyond this; and the other thinkers of the period did no more than he. But is that the foundation of a world philosophy? Is that really treating human history at all? Is it any wonder that when Nietzsche, without knowing anything of Egypt or Babylon, Russia or China, passes from isolated observations to generalities—such as his ideas on the morality of the rulers, the blond beast, the superman—he immediately arrives at summary, supposedly all-inclusive constructions which are in reality quite provincial, entirely arbitrary, and even comic?

What reference does his concept of the Dionysian have to the interior life of the highly civilized Chinese in the time of Confucius, or of a modern American? What does this type of superman mean for the world of Islam? Or what significance should the concepts nature and mind, heathen and Christian, ancient and modern, have as formal antitheses in the soul of the Hindu or the Russian? What has Tolstoy, who from the depths of his nature rejected the ideology of the West as something foreign and remote, to do with the "middle ages," with Dante, with Luther? What has a Japanese to do with Percival and Zarathustra, or a Hindu with Sophocles? And is the system of ideas in Schopenhauer, Comte, Feuerbach, Hebbel, Strindberg any the more extensive? Despite all cosmic aspirations, is not their total psychology of purely Occidental significance? How comic is the effect of Ibsen's feminist problems, which are offered with a claim to the attention of all "mankind," if instead of Nora, a metropolitan lady of Northwestern Europe whose horizon is suited to a Protestant education and a house rent of two to six thousand marks, one substitutes Caesar's wife, Madame de Sévigné, a Japanese, or a Tyrolean peasant woman? But Ibsen himself possesses the horizon of the metropolitan middle class of yesterday and to-day. His conflicts, whose psychic factors have been present since about 1850 and will hardly last beyond 1950, have already ceased to be those of the *haut monde* and the lower classes, to say nothing of cities with a non-European population.

These are all local and episodic values which are restricted mostly to the intelligentsia momentarily inhabiting the metropolises of Western-European type; they are anything but universal and eternal. And no matter how essential they are to the generations of

Ibsen and Nietzsche, yet it would involve misconstruing the sense of the term universal history—which does not represent a choice, but a totality—if one were to subordinate the factors lying outside modern interests, and were to underestimate or neglect them. And that is the case to an unusual degree. Heretofore whatever has been said and thought in the Occident concerning the problems of space, time, motion, number, the will, marriage, property, tragedy, or science, remained narrow and doubtful, because people were always concerned with finding *the* solution to *the* problem, instead of perceiving that many inquiries call forth many answers, that a philosophical question is only the concealed wish to uphold a definite answer which is already included in the question, that one cannot conceive the great questions of an age ephemerally enough, and that consequently one must admit a *group of historically conditioned solutions*, and only by *surveying them all*—with the elimination of his own convictions—does he arrive at their profoundest meaning. For the genuine thinker there is no absolutely right or wrong standpoint. When facing such weighty problems as those of time or marriage, it is not enough to question one's inner voice, or reason, the opinions of ancestors or contemporaries. In this way one finds what is true for himself, for his own times, but that is not enough. The phenomena of other cultures speak different languages. For other men there are other truths. For the thinker all or none are valid.

It is obvious how much the Occidental criticism of life can be extended and deepened, what must be drawn into the sphere of observation besides the harmless relativism of Nietzsche and his generation, what delicate sense of forms, what degree of psychology, what negation and independence of practical interests, what freedom of outlook must be attained before one dare say that he has understood world history, the *world as history*.

IX

Over against all this (these arbitrary, narrow forms which come from without, are dictated by personal interest, and are imposed upon history) I oppose the natural, "Copernican" structure of world events which is latent deep within them and reveals itself to the unprejudiced view.

I recall Goethe. What he called *living nature* is exactly the same as what is here called universal history in its widest reaches, *world as history*. Goethe, who as artist constructs life again and again, who shows the development of its forms, shows it in fluctuation rather than rigidity, as Wilhelm Meister and Wahrheit und Dichtung testify—Goethe hated mathematics. Here the world as mechanism stood opposed to the world as organism, dead nature to living nature, law to form. Every line which he wrote as a natural scientist was intended to display the forms of growth, "imprinted form, which develops in living." Sympathy, intuition, comparison, immediate inner certainty, exact sensuous imagination—those were his means of approaching the secrets of objects in movement. *And those are entirely the means of historical research.* There are no others. This *divine* vision enabled him to say by the campfire on the eve of the battle of Valmy, "At this place and on this day a new epoch of world history begins, and you can say that you were present." No army leader, no diplomat, to say nothing of philosophers, has so directly felt history in the making. It is the profoundest judgement which was ever pronounced on a great act of history at the moment when it was transpiring.

And just as he followed the growth of the plant form from the leaf, the origin of the vertebrates, and the development of geological strata—the *destiny of nature, not its causality*—in the same way from the abundance of all visible details we shall evolve the form-language of human history, its periodic structure, the breath of history.

In other respects man has been counted among the organisms of the earth's surface, and for good reasons. His anatomy, his natural functions, all his material manifestations, everything is part of a more comprehensive unity. But here an exception is made, despite the deeply felt relationship between the destiny of a plant and the destiny of man (an eternal theme of the lyric) and despite the resemblance between all human history and the history of every other group of higher organisms (a theme of countless tales, sagas, and fables). *Here* let us compare by letting the world of human cultures work freely and profoundly upon the imaginative faculties, not by forcing it into a preconceived scheme. Whereas the words youth, growth, flowering, decay were always considered here-

tofore, and to-day more than ever, as expressing subjective evaluations and purely personal interests of social, moral, or aesthetic nature, let us now see them as objective characterizations of organic conditions. Let us place the Ancient culture as a self-contained phenomenon, the embodiment and expression of the Ancient soul, alongside the Egyptian, Hindu, Babylonian, Chinese, Occidental cultures; let us discover what is typical in the vicissitudes of these vast units, what is inevitable in the rich riot of chaos; and we shall finally see unfolded before us the vision of a universal history which is natural to us, the people of the Occident, and to us alone.

X

Returning to our narrower theme, from this universal approach we are to determine morphologically the structure of the present, especially between 1800 and 2000. We must fix the time of this epoch with relation to the total culture of the Occident, fixing its meaning as a cross-section of biography which must necessarily be met with under some parallel form in every culture, and establishing the organic and symbolic significance of the political, artistic, intellectual, and social aspects proper to it.

At this point the similarity of the period to Hellenism is manifest; and especially at its momentary apogee—characterized by the World War—when it parallels the transition of the Hellenistic era into the Roman. With a rigorous sense of facts, devoid of genius, barbaric, disciplined, practical, protestant, *Prussian*, Rome will always provide us with the key to an understanding of our own future when we turn our attention to comparisons. *Greeks and Romans—therein lies the distinction between the destiny which has already been completed for us and that which is yet in store for us.* For we could and should long past have found in antiquity an evolution which forms a complete counterpart to our Western-European evolution, different in every surface detail, but wholly similar as to the inner pressure which drives the great organism to its completion. Trait for trait, from the Trojan War and the Crusades, Homer and the Niebelungenlied, through the Doric and the Gothic, the Dionysian movement and the Renaissance, Polycletus and Sebastian Bach, Athens and Paris, Aristotle

and Kant, Alexander and Napoleon, up to the stage of the metropolis and imperialism in both cultures, we should have found here a constant *alter ego* of our own reality.

But the interpretation of the Ancient historic prospect which was here a necessary preliminary—how one-sidedly it has always been undertaken, how superficially, with what prejudice, how inconclusively! Since we felt ourselves all too closely related to the Ancients, we made our task all too easy. In the *superficial* similarity lies the danger which befell all investigations of antiquity. It is a lasting prejudice, which we should finally overcome, that antiquity has any close inner relationship to us, since we are supposedly its disciples and descendants, but are in fact only its worshippers. All the work of the nineteenth century in religious philosophy, the history of art, and social criticism was necessary, not to give us finally an understanding of Apollo and Dionysus, the dramas of Aeschylus, the doctrines of Plato, the Athenian state, and Caesarism (from all of which we are far removed) but to make us feel how immeasurably foreign and remote it all is to us in its essence, more foreign perhaps than the Mexican gods and Hindu architecture.

Our notions of Greek-Roman culture have always moved between two extremes, in which the scheme antiquity, middle ages, modernity has invariably predetermined the perspective of all "standpoints." Some of us, especially people in public life, political economists, politicians, jurists, find "present-day humanity" in full progress, rate it very highly, and measure everything earlier by its standards. There is no modern party by whose principles Cleon, Marius, Themistocles, Catiline, and the Gracchi have not been "evaluated." Others, artists, poets, philologists, and philosophers do not feel at home in such a present; they choose from some past period an equally absolute standpoint and from that judge the present with the same dogmatism. The ones see in Greece a "not yet," the others in modernity a "no longer," always under the suggestion of an outlook upon history wherein the two phenomena are brought into a straight line.

It is the two souls of Faust which have found expression in this contrast. The danger of the one lies in an intelligent superficiality. Of all that Ancient culture and the splendour of the Ancient soul stood for, nothing is left in their hands but social,

economic, legal, political, physiological "facts." The rest takes on the character of "secondary issues," "reflexes," "attendant phenomena." Their books do not mention the mythic pressure in the choruses of Aeschylus, the colossal earthy power of the older plastic art, the Dorian column, the ardour of the Apollonic cult, or even the profundities of the Roman emperor-worship. The others, primarily belated romantics, as the three Basle professors Bachofen, Burckhardt, and Nietzsche, succumb to the danger of all ideology. They lose themselves in the cloudy regions of an antiquity which is purely the reflection of their philologically ordered sensitivity. They abandon themselves to the reliques of the old literature, the only testimony which is noble enough for them—but no culture has ever been more incompletely represented by its great writers.¹ The others rely predominantly on the prosaic source material of legal documents, inscriptions, and coins (which Burckhardt and Nietzsche particularly had neglected much to their disadvantage) and subordinate to this the surviving literature with its frequently minimal sense of truth and facts. Thus, neither faction took the other's critical groundwork very seriously. I am not aware that Nietzsche and Mommsen paid the slightest attention to each other.

But neither has reached the height of observation from which this contrast falls into nothing, although this would have been possible. This was the punishment for transferring the causal principle from natural science to the study of history. A pragmatism was arrived at which superficially imitated the scheme of physics, but which, instead of clarifying the very differently constituted form-language of history, obscured and confused it. On all sides, in subjecting the mass of historic material to a deepened and orderly arrangement, no one knew anything better than to set up a complex of phenomena as primary, as causes, and treat the rest accordingly as secondary, as results or effects. Not only the practical-minded, but also the romantics took recourse to this, be-

¹ The selection of remains is decisive since it is determined, not by accident, but by a profound tendency. The Atticism of the Augustine age, weary, unfruitful, pedantic, retrospective, has moulded the concept of the *classical* and has recognized a very small group of Greek works up to Plato as classical. The rest, among it all the rich literature of Hellenism, was discarded and became almost completely lost. This group, selected by a clerkish taste, has for the most part been preserved and has determined the imaginary portrait of classical "Antiquity" in Florence as well as for Winckelmann, Hölderlin, Goethe, and even Nietzsche.

cause history did not disclose its *own* logic to their limited view—and the need of settling on some immanent necessity whose presence was *felt* was much too strong, unless like Schopenhauer one wanted to turn his back sullenly upon history altogether.

XI

Let us speak without further ado of a materialistic and an idealistic manner of seeing antiquity. In the former it is asserted that the sinking of the one scale has its cause in the rise of the other. It is shown that this is the case without exception—doubtless a telling bit of evidence. Thus we have here cause and effect, and—of course—we represent the social and economic and especially the purely political phenomena as causes; the religious, intellectual, artistic as effects (in so far as the materialist allows these latter to be termed facts at all). The idealists, obversely, show how the rise of the one scale follows from the sinking of the other, and they show it with the same precision. They plunge into cults, mysteries, customs, into the secrets of verse and of the line, and they deign hardly a passing glance at common everyday life, the wretched issue of earthly imperfection. Both demonstrate, with the causal nexus plainly in view, that the others obviously do not or will not see the true interrelationship of things; and they end by abusing one another as blind, superficial, stupid, absurd, or frivolous, as queer old codgers or crass Philistines. The idealist is horrified if any one takes money problems among the Hellenes seriously and, for instance, instead of discussing the profound utterances of the oracle at Delphi, speaks of the extensive financial operations which the priests of the oracle undertook with the sums deposited there. But the hard-headed laugh knowingly at the man who squanders his enthusiasm on sacred formularies and the costumes of Attic *ephebi*, instead of writing on the Ancient class-struggles in a book brimming with up-to-date catchwords.

The one type is already foreshadowed in Petrarch. He created Florence and Weimar, the concept of the Renaissance, and Occidental classicism. The other is in evidence since the middle of the eighteenth century, with the beginning of civilized, economic-metropolitan policies, and thus first in England (Grote). At bottom the attitudes of the cultivated and the civilized man here stand

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opposed, a contrast which is too deep, too human for the inferiority of *both* standpoints to be felt or completely overcome.

In this matter materialism also proceeds idealistically. Unwittingly and unwillingly it has made its views dependent upon hidden desires. Indeed, our best minds have all without exception bowed in reverence before the image of antiquity and in this one case renounced a thorough-going criticism. The analysis of Antiquity has always been obscured by a certain timidity. In the whole of history there is no other example of such a passionate cult maintained by one culture for the memory of another. That we should unite antiquity and modernity ideally by a "middle age," across a thousand years of undervalued, almost despised history, is simply one expression of this unthinking devotion. We Western Europeans have sacrificed to "the Ancients" the purity and independence of our art, in that we did not dare to create without one eye on the lofty "prototype." We have always added to, or *read into*, our idea of the Greeks and Romans what we lacked or yearned for in the depths of our own soul. Some day an ingenious psychologist will relate to us the history of our fatal illusion, the history of what we always honoured as Ancient. There are few tasks which would be more helpful to an intimate understanding of the Occidental soul from Emperor Otto III to Nietzsche, from the first victim of the South to the last.

On his Italian journey Goethe speaks with enthusiasm of the architecture of Palladia, whose frosty academicism we approach to-day with the greatest scepticism. He then sees Pompeii and speaks with undisguised dissatisfaction of its "strange, half-unpleasant effect." His remarks on the temples of Paestum and Segesta, masterworks of Hellenic art, are flat and insignificant. Obviously he did not recognize antiquity once it stood before him corporeally in its full power. That characterizes the essence of our feeling for history: we do not desire impressions of the foreign, but expressions of ourselves. This "antiquity" has always been the horizon of an historic panorama which we created and nourished with our best blood; it is a receptacle for our own modes of experience, a phantom, an idol. Among the intellectuals and in poetic circles there is a vogue for the bold descriptions of big-city life in Aristophanes, Juvenal, and Petronius, for Southern smut and vulgarity, turmoil and violence, catamites and punks, phallic worship

and imperial orgies—but the same slice of reality in present-day metropolises is avoided with grumblings and turned-up noses. "To live in cities is bad: here there are too many of the passionate." Thus spake Zarathustra. They praise the national-mindedness of the Romans and despise any one who does not to-day avoid all contact with public affairs. There is a class of connoisseurs for whom the difference between toga and overcoat, Byzantine circus and English athletic field, Ancient alpine roads and transcontinental railways, triremes and express trains, Roman lances and Prussian bayonets, even between the Suez Canal built by a Pharaoh or by a modern engineer, possesses a magic power which securely numbs any independence of vision. They would not admit the steam engine as a symbol of human passion and an expression of vital energy unless it had been invented by Hero of Alexandria. It is blasphemy to them if, instead of the cult of the Great Mother of Mount Pessinus, one mentions Roman book-keeping and central heating. Yet the Greek word for money was ἀφορμή, starting-point, and Thucydides praises the Athenians of his time (I, 70) because they knew no festivals except the plying of their trade.¹

Yet the others see *nothing* but this. They think they are exhausting the nature of this culture, so foreign to us, when they treat the Greeks forthwith as in every way similar to us; and, when they draw psychological conclusions, they move within a system of identities which absolutely fails to touch the Ancient *soul*. They do not even suspect that words like republic, freedom, property indicate in these two fields things which at bottom do not have the slightest relationship. They ridicule historians of the Goethean period for expressing political ideals by writing histories of antiquity and, with the names Lycurgus, Brutus, Cato, Cicero, Augustus, concealing private programmes or personal enthusiasms beneath defences or condemnations; but they themselves cannot write a chapter without betraying with what political tendency their morning paper is allied.

But it is all the same whether one views the past with the eyes of Don Quixote or of Sancho Panza. Neither road leads to the goal. In the end each of them has permitted himself to place in the

¹ The Roman *otium cum dignitate* is to be understood primarily as the obverse of a large-scale and energetic public activity, not as private lyrical and cultivated idling, which is not described until very late in the letters of the younger Pliny.

foreground that part of antiquity which happened to fall in best with his own intentions: Nietzsche pre-Socratic Athens, political economists the Hellenistic period, politicians the republican Rome, and poets the empire.

Not that religious or artistic phenomena are more fundamental than social and economic ones. Nor the reverse. To whoever has attained here an unqualified freedom of outlook, beyond *all* personal interests of any kind whatsoever, there is absolutely no kind of dependence, no priority, no cause and effect, no difference of value and importance. The single phenomenon acquires its rank simply by reason of the greater or lesser purity and strength of its form-language, the power of its symbolism—aside from good and evil, high and low, utility and ideal.

XII

The Fall of the Occident, so considered, means nothing less than the *problem of civilization*. We here face one of the basic questions of all history. What is civilization, conceived as the logical result, as the conclusion and outcome of a culture?

For every culture has its *own* civilization. Here for the first time these two words, which were used previously to signify a vague ethical difference of a personal character, are grasped in a periodic sense, as expressions of a strict and determined *organic sequence*. Civilization is the inevitable *fate* of a culture. Here the point is reached from which the ultimate and most difficult questions in the morphology of history become solvable. Civilizations are the *outermost* and *most artificial* conditions of which a superior type of man is capable. They are a conclusion: they follow upon the growing as the grown, upon life as death, upon development as rigidity, upon the countryside and spiritual childhood (shown in Doric and Gothic) as intellectual old age and the petrified, petrificative metropolis. They are an *end*, irrevocably; but they have been arrived at again and again through the deepest necessity.

Only in this way will the Roman be understood as the successor to the Hellene. Only in this way does the latter phase of antiquity come into a light which exposes its profoundest secrets. For what does it signify—and it can only be combated with empty words—that the Romans were barbarians, not barbarians preceding a great

florescence, but concluding it? Soulless, unphilosophic, without art, animal to the extent of brutality, clinging relentlessly to material successes, they stand between Hellenic culture and annihilation. Their inventiveness with its highly practical turn—they possessed a religious law regulating the relationship between gods and men as between private individuals, but not a trace of myth—is a faculty which is not met with at all in Athens. Greek soul and Roman intellect—so it stands. Such is the difference between culture and civilization. This does not apply to Antiquity alone. Again and again this type of hard-headed, completely unmetaphysical men emerges. The intellectual and material destiny of every terminal period is in their hands. They perfected Babylonian, Egyptian, Hindu, Chinese, and Roman imperialism. In such epochs Buddhism, Stoicism, and Socialism have matured to ultimate philosophic attitudes which are capable of comprehending and symbolizing once more the total substance of a dying humanity. *Pure civilization as an historic process consists in a gradual exhaustion of forms which have become dead and inorganic.*

The transition from culture to civilization takes place in antiquity in the fourth century, in the Occident in the nineteenth. From then on the great intellectual decisions no longer fall, as at the time of the Orphic movement and the Reformation, in the "whole world" where in the last analysis not a single village is quite without importance, but in three or four metropolises which have absorbed the total content of history and in contrast to which all the country districts of the culture sink to the rank of provinces having for their part simply to nourish the metropolises with the reliques of their higher humanity. *Metropolis and province*—with these basic concepts of all civilization a whole new form-problem of history comes to the fore: and we of the present are living in the very midst of it without even remotely grasping the full extent of its meaning. Instead of a world, we have a *city* or a *point* in which the whole life of large territories is assembled, while the rest grows dormant; instead of a morphotic people growing with the earth, there are the new nomads, the parasites, the dwellers in the big city, the pure traditionless men of hard facts who come forward in a formlessly fluctuating mass, irreligious, intelligent, with a profound distaste for the peasantry (and its highest form, the landed gentry) and thus an enormous stride towards the inorganic, the

end. What does that mean? France and England have completed this step, and Germany is in the process of taking it. Syracuse, Athens, Alexandria are followed by Rome. Madrid, Paris, London are followed by Berlin. It is the fate of entire countries which do not lie within the radius of one of these cities to become provincial, as formerly Crete and Macedonia and to-day the Scandinavian North.¹

At one time the struggle for the ideal possession of an epoch was enacted in the field of universal metaphysical problems dealing with matters of cult or dogma; and this was waged between the rustic spirit of the peasantry (nobility and priesthood) and the "mundane" patrician spirit of the old, small, famous cities, during the Doric and Gothic early periods. Such were the battles over the religion of Dionysus—for example under the tyrant Cleisthenes of Sicyon²—and over the Reformation in the German imperial cities, and in the wars of the Huguenots. But as the cities finally conquered the country—a purely urbane outlook is met with as early as Parmenides and Descartes—so in turn these cities were conquered by the metropolis. That is the intellectual process of all terminal periods, Ionic as well as Baroque. To-day, as in the time of Hellenism—whose beginning is marked by the establishment of a great artistic (ergo, alien) city, Alexandria—these culture-cities (Florence, Nuremberg, Salamanca, Bruges, Prague) have become provincial cities which offer a hopeless intellectual resistance to the spirit of the metropolis. The metropolis means cosmopolitanism in place of the "home,"³ the cool sense of facts instead of reverence before the traditional and the inveterate, scientific irreligion as the petrification of the earlier religion of the heart, "society" in place of the state, natural rights instead of acquired right. *Money* as an inorganic abstract factor, freed of all reference to the sense of the

¹ Which should not be overlooked in the development of Strindberg, and especially Ibsen, who was always merely a guest in the civilized atmosphere of his problems. The motif of Brand and Rosmersholm is a remarkable mixture of innate provincialism and a theoretically acquired metropolitan outlook. Nora is the prototype of a provincial woman derailed by reading.

² Who forbade the cult of the local hero Adrastus and the recital of the Homeric songs, in order to deprive the Doric nobility of the roots of its spirituality (circa 560).

³ A profound word which receives its meaning as soon as the barbarian becomes a man of culture, and loses it again as soon as the civilized man accepts the "*ubi bene, ibi patria*."

fertile soil, or to the basic values of living—the Romans have this advantage over the Greeks. Henceforth a distinguished attitude towards life becomes *also a question of money*. Not the Greek stoicism of Chrysippus, but the late Roman stoicism of Cato and Seneca presupposes wealth as a rudiment;¹ and not the social-ethical attitude of the eighteenth century, but that of the twentieth, is a matter for millionaires (if it desires to become a reality, something more than a professional salaried agitation). To the metropolis belongs not a people, but a mass. Their blindness to all tradition, whereby they combat *culture* (the nobility, the church, privilege, the dynasty, the conventions in art, the limits of knowledge in science) their cold sharp intelligence with its superiority to rustic prudence, their naturalism (in an entirely new sense, which goes back far beyond Socrates and Rousseau in all sexual and social matters and links up with primitive instincts and conditions) the *panem et circenses* which appears again to-day under the guise of the wage-war and the athletic field—all this indicates (in opposition to the finally concluded culture, the provinces) a wholly new, late, and futureless, but inevitable form of human existence.

That is what will be *seen*, not with the eyes of the partisan, the ideologist, the time-serving moralist, from the angle of some particular "standpoint," but from a timeless elevation, with the gaze directed upon the world of historic forms across thousands of years—if one desires to really grasp the great crisis of the present.

I see symbols of the first order in the fact that at Rome (where about 60 B. C. the triumvir Crassus was the first speculator in real estate) the Roman people, who were vaunted in all inscriptions and before whom the Gauls, Greeks, Parthians, and Syrians trembled in the distance, were housed with enormous misery in many-storied tenements of the dark suburbs² and took the successes of military expansion with indifference or a kind of sporting interest; that many of the great families of the old nobility, descendants of the conquerors of the Celts, Samnites, and Hannibal, were compelled

¹ For this reason the first to yield to Christianity were the Romans who *could not afford* to be Stoics.

² In Rome and Byzantium six- and ten-story lodging houses (with a street frontage of three metres at the most) were erected; and in the absence of official building regulations these would often collapse with their inmates. A great part of the *cives Romani*, for whom "*panem et circenses*" provided their entire life-interests, had only a dearly paid-for sleeping place in the antlike swarming "*insulae*."

to give up their ancestral homes and move into poor rented quarters because they did not take part in the disastrous speculations; that while the burial monuments of Rome's financial magnates (monuments which we still marvel at to-day) towered along the Via Appia, the corpses of the populace, together with dead animals and the refuse of the metropolis, were tossed into a gruesome common grave, until under Augustus the place was filled in to avoid plagues and Maecenas then laid his famous park here; that in depopulated Athens, which lived on the visits of foreigners and the endowments of rich aliens (as the Jewish King Herod) the transient mob of Romans which had grown rich too quick gaped at the works of the Periclean age which they understood as little as the American visitors do Michael Angelo's Sistine Chapel, after all movable artworks had been carried away or bought up at fantastic fashionable prices and colossal and presumptuous Roman buildings had been placed alongside the profound and modest works of the old period. These things, which the historian has neither to praise nor blame, but to consider morphologically, bring immediately to light, for whoever has learned to see, an *idea*.

To-day, as then, it is not a question of whether one is by birth Germanic or Latin, Hellene or Roman, but whether one is by training cosmopolitan or provincial. That is more decisive than all the specific facts. Here we find as the expression of a new style of living, a new general attitude which is complete within its own terms. A metamorphosis is being accomplished which is highly significant, and is invariable in all instances available up to the present. One of the most important reasons why we had not discovered the real structure of history in the confused panorama of the historic surface has been that we did not understand how to separate the form-complexes of cultivated and civilized existences after their mutual interpenetration. A criticism of the present faces here its weightiest task.

For it will be seen that from this moment on all great conflicts in philosophic attitude, in politics, art, science, and feeling are marked by this one contrast. What is civilized politics of to-morrow in contrast to cultivated politics of yesterday? In antiquity rhetoric, in the Occident journalism, and always in the service of that abstract quantity which represents the power of civilization: *money*. It is this spirit which unnoticeably permeates the historic

forms of a people's manner of living, often without altering or disturbing it in the least. From the elder Scipio Africanus until Augustus the mechanism of the Roman state remained stationary to a much greater extent than is usually supposed. But at the time of the Gracchi, as in the twentieth century, the great parties, vehicles of a worn-out form of political life, are only apparently the central factors in decisive actions. In reality it was of no moment to the Forum Romanum how the forum at Pompeii was discussing, deciding, and voting; and in our own future the three or four leading papers will determine the opinions of the provincial press and thereby the "will of the people." There is a small number of superior brains (their names are perhaps not the best known at this moment) who decide everything, while the great mass of second-rate politicians, rhetoricians and tribunes, deputies and journalists, a selection to conform with the provincial horizons of the submerged, maintains the illusion of a popular independence. And art? Philosophy? The ideals of the Platonic and Kantian periods were thoroughly suited to a higher humanity. Those of Hellenism and the present, especially Socialism, Darwinism (genetically so closely related to it) with its so very un-Goethean formulae of the struggle for life and natural selection, and the likewise related feminist and marriage problems of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Shaw, the impressionistic leanings of an anarchic sensuousness, the whole lump sum of modern yearnings, excitements, and pains, whose expression is in the lyric of Baudelaire and the music of Wagner—these do not fall within the experience of the small-town man and particularly the natural man, but exist exclusively for the metropolitan man of brains. The smaller the city, the more meaningless its preoccupation with such painting and music. To culture belong gymnastics, tournaments, the agon; to civilization, sport. That also distinguishes the Hellenic palestra from the Roman circus.¹ Art itself becomes a sport—that is the meaning of *l'art pour l'art*—for a highly intelligent public of connoisseurs and buyers, whether it is concerned with the mastery of absurd instrumental tone-masses and harmonic obstacles, or with the "doing" of a problem in colour. A new philosophy of hard facts appears which has

¹ German gymnastics, since 1813 and the highly provincial indigenous forms which Jahn gave it at that time, has been rapidly developing into sport. By 1914 there was very little difference between a Berlin athletic field on a gala day and a Roman circus.

nothing but a smile for metaphysical speculations, a new literature which is a necessity for the intellect, the taste, and the nerves of the metropolitan, but is incomprehensible and detestable to the provincial.¹ Neither Alexandrian poetry nor *plein-air* painting touches the "people." Then, as now, the transition is marked by a series of scandals which are to be met with only in such an epoch. The indignation of the Athenians against Euripides and the revolutionary painting of Apollodorus, for instance, is repeated in the resistance to Wagner, Manet, Ibsen, and Nietzsche.

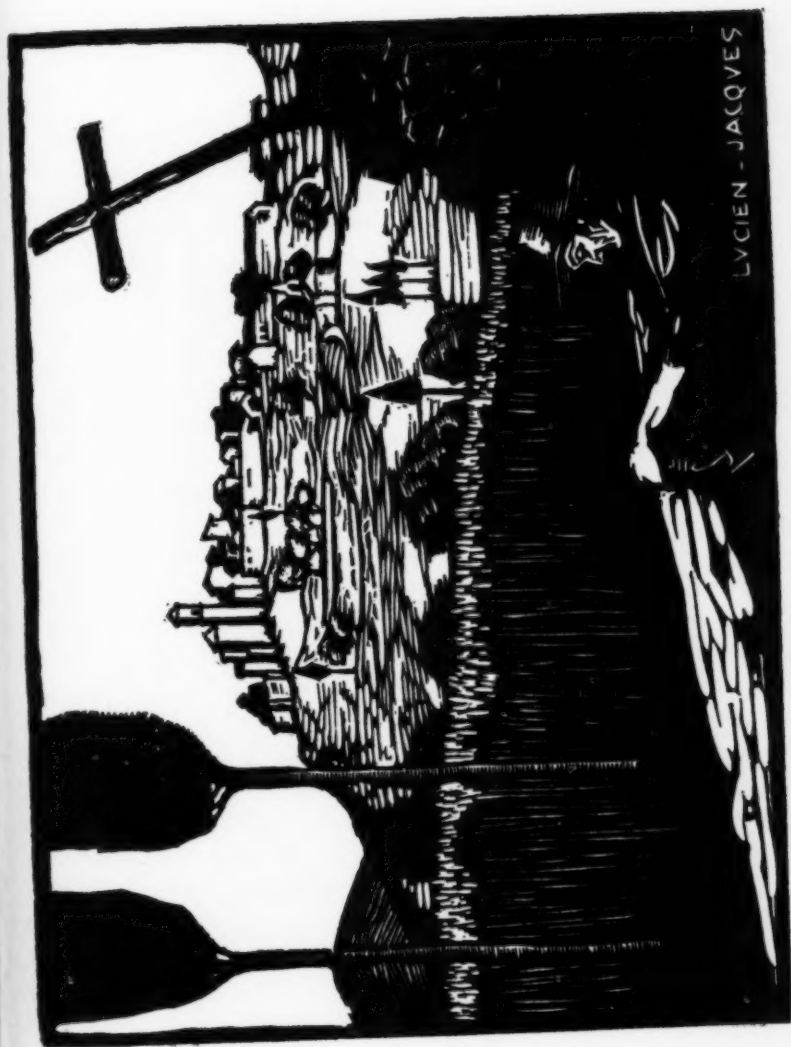
One can understand the Greeks without talking of their economic affairs. It is *only* through these that one can understand the Romans. The last battle over an idea was fought at Chaeronea and at Leipzig. In the first Punic war and at Sedan the economic moments can no longer be overlooked. It was the Romans with their practical energy who first gave slave labour and the slave trade those gigantic proportions which for many are the decisive factor in defining the Ancient type of living. Similarly, it remained for the Germanic, and not the Romanic, peoples of Western Europe to develop the steam engine into a major industry which is altering the aspect of the nations. One will not overlook the relationship of both deeply symbolic phenomena to Stoicism and Socialism. Roman Caesarism (which was foreshadowed in Caius Flaminius and took form for the first time in Marius) first taught within the Ancient world the *exaltedness of money*—in the hands of firm, highly capable men of affairs. Without that neither Caesar nor Rome is at all comprehensible. Every Greek has a touch of Don Quixote, every Roman of Sancho Panza—all else that they were retreats behind this.

¹ Whatever in the way of literary battles has taken place in Germany since 1880 is nothing but the struggle (waged, it may be added, among people of small importance) between cosmopolitan and provincial poetry (fire-side art).

To be concluded



SAINT CASSIEN. BY LUCIEN JACQUES



LUCIEN - JACQUES

CABRIS. BY LUCIEN JACQUES

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PARIS LETTER

November, 1924

OF late Paris has been a fair of literary and artistic samples. The abundance of books and sights is such that I must choose at random and, as my space is limited, must of necessity omit much. Let me, however, mention that a little while ago one could witness at the Champs-Élysées the novelties of the Russian Ballet: *Les Fâcheux*, by Auric, *Les Biches*, by Poulenc, *Le Train Bleu*, by Milhaud, of which I told you on the occasion of their appearances at Monte-Carlo last winter. At the Opera, Chaliapin sang Boris Godounov and when he put his hand on the head of the young Czar we felt all at once ten years younger. At the Cigale, the Count of Beaumont presented *Salade*, by Milhaud; the Beautiful Blue Danube, with music by Strauss and a *décor* after Constantin Guys; *Mercure*, a very important score by Satie, and the *Romeo* by Jean Cocteau. This *Romeo* has aroused great public interest. It is a very free and very intelligent adaptation, modern both in spirit and language. Some thought it too free; a critic accused Cocteau of having "organized a promenade among Shakespeare's ruins." But the success that the simplified *décors* and above all the marvellous costumes of Jean Victor Hugo and his wife, grandchildren of the poet, scored is indisputable. The Hugos have brought the historical costume into its own again. The house cried: "Hugo! Hugo!" and one could have imagined oneself at the opening performance of *Hernani*, in 1830. To continue: Rubinstein played at Gaveau's. The Vienna Opera scored a triumph with Mozart, chiefly owing to Selma Kurz in *L'Enlèvement au Sérail*. Braque and Picasso exhibited curtains and *décors* not only at Rosenberg's, but also at certain theatres, where, to an experienced public, they revealed at last the new secrets. The Mengelberg concert, of Amsterdam, with the *Passion Selon St-Mathieu*, gave a severe lesson in choral discipline and an unforgettable performance; after Damrosch and his Beethoven festivals, Wanda Landowska, back from the States, performed, with Barrientos, works by Mozart and Bach. Lastly, Honneger with his *Roi David*

triumphed at the Champs-Élysées. This Oratorio, with its important choirs, is treated with extreme simplicity which has insured its success with the general French public, known to be so reactionary in music; Honneger is, with the Milhaud of the *Choéphores*, the one amongst our young musicians who has a real sense of grandeur. If we add to all this the spectacle of the Olympic games, that are of no less perfect an art, many of them fortuitous, like the singing of the Uruguayans on the evening of their world's victory in association football, amongst all the lighted candles in their Olympic lanterns, or—whether on the lawn or at the pond of Tourelles—the enthusiasm of the American athletes for their coming victories, you have a conception of the Parisian spring of 1924, frivolous and dramatic.

In one of my recent letters to this magazine I told you how the crisis of adolescence hastened the breaking-up of Dada and rather quickly induced some to acknowledge, others to revoke, and, lastly, a few (these being rare) to persist. Moreover, as Dada is the cult of negation, all literary production infringes on it. Nevertheless, they all write. A certain parallelism in their destinies (because with these young men Life has not yet intervened with its infinite variety of catastrophes and benefactions) threaten monotony in their literary adventures. You know how I liked *Le Bon Apôtre* by Soupault; *A la Dérive*, his new novel (and also *Terres Étrangères* by Marcel Arland) is quite its equal as a study of this "*mal du siècle*" of which Gide, with his *Paludes*, became the father on the French literary stage. One cannot but enjoy the wilful neglect of plot, the excessive bareness of style, the cult of the unconscious, and above all, the "moral aim" that all these young men strive for. (See the controversy between Jacques Rivière and Marcel Arland, mentioned in my preceding letter.) Unluckily all these books resemble one another. The case of André Breton and of Aragon is more complicated; I said about *Clair de Terre*, the book of poems by Breton, how important it appeared to me. *La Nouvelle Revue Française* has brought out, under the title, *Les Pas Perdus*, a series of essays by M Breton written since the armistice, of which the first one, the *Confession Dédaigneuse*, is absolutely necessary for whosoever wants to understand the actual development of the pure literary idea. First a high conception of art: "I publish in order to find men"; contempt

for "culture" and yet preoccupation with the moral question; good essays on Apollinaire, Lautréamont, Chirico, Max Ernst. One of the most curious tendencies of the advanced schools seems to me the pursuit of obscenity. Whether picturesque, as in Delteil, already more complicated in Joyce, pedantic in the disciples of Freud, artistic in Larbaud, of a popular or scholarly source as in Apollinaire, it is, in Aragon, adorned by a vivid taste for the French "*petits maîtres*" of the eighteenth century and particularly Restif de la Bretonne. In this respect the last essay of the *Liber-tinage*, entitled *La Femme Française*, is an exceedingly remarkable literary piece, and transposed in the bitter taste of to-day, is equal to the finest pages of the *Liaisons Dangereuses*.

The Académie Française—I haven't the art of transition—has just given to M Abel Bonnard, whose talent is as yet not enough known in the States, its Grand Prix de Littérature for his book *En Chine*. This is an important honour that now rewards an excellent and discreet artist, the author of this philosophic book of travels. M Bonnard, who went to the Far East two years ago, has not brought us back mellow romantic impressions, but a compact, useful, and exact work. Bonnard holds pessimistic views on the condition of China; but we hold optimistic views on the future of Abel Bonnard the traveller. In justice to his reading, his knowledge, his bitter and distinguished intelligence, he owes it to himself to continue contributing to this great inquiry into universal geography which will be the literature of to-morrow.

The last book of the brothers Tharaud, *L'An Prochain à Jérusalem*,¹ one of their best (who said that the French don't travel?) leads us among the fields of Palestine and the sombre passages of Zionism where these Occidental Gods, Lord Rothschild, and Mr Balfour, sparkle with an Asiatic fire.

With the last book of Robert de Traz, a writer of Suisse Romande, we return to pure literature. As De Traz is geographically located at the same distance from France and from Central Europe, he is better informed than anybody else; American readers who want impartial, audacious ideas about Europe should read his *Dépaysements*. The same honesty, the same schematic elegance,

¹ Published in English by Robert M. McBride and Company under the title *When Israel Is King*, translated from the sixty-fourth French edition by the Hon. Lady Whitehead. (12mo. 248 pages. \$2.)

the same seriousness will be found in his imaginary works. Com-plices, his last book, contains an excellent short story, *Le Visage Différent*. Lastly, M Corbeau, whose first book, *Le Gigantesque, Monographie Littéraire d'un Arbre*,¹ has had a tremendous success in the English-speaking countries, now gives us *L'Heure Finale*, a study of the last hour of a dying man, in which certain lyric passages reach heights of grandeur.

With reference to Abel Hermant's book, *Xavier ou les Entretiens sur la Grammaire*, I mentioned to you the taste of the French for this old sport which they have practised with a unique passion since the seventeenth century; here we have a new book by Jacques and André Thérive, the *Soirées du Grammaire Club*. This book, though just published, is in its fifteenth edition. It is a peculiar document on the French spirit.

Jacques Rivière, who directs and maintains on such a sure course *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, the importance of which remains so considerable in foreign countries, has just republished his *Etudes*, which, when they appeared in 1912, drew attention to him and won him disciples at an age when, at least before the war, one still was learning. Essays on Baudelaire, Claudel, Gide, Rameau, Bach, Moussorgsky, Debussy, Ingres, Cézanne, et cetera. There one sees, considering the epoch, the proof of a rather sure judgement! The essay on Paul Claudel, that genius whom fashion has so unjustly driven into oblivion, certainly is the most remarkable one. Besides, we owe to Rivière the publication this month of post-humous fragments by his brother-in-law Alain Fournier, the author of *Grand Meaulnes*, of whom everything was expected when he was killed in the war.

Finally, I want to report an important exposition of *native art* of the French Colonies, at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Negro art has attained the rights of citizenship with the general French public since 1919. There were to be seen remarkable masks from Guinea, idols of the collections Haviland and Paul Guillaume, statues from Dahomey, the Sudan, Gabon, and the Congo, together with sculptures from French Indo-China, loaned by the Musée Guimet.

PAUL MORAND

¹ Published in translation by Harper and Brothers, New York, under the title, *The Forest Giant*. (8vo. 139 pages. \$2.)

BOOK REVIEWS

A BOOK ON MODERN ART

THE MASTERS OF MODERN ART. *By Walter Pach.*
Illustrated. 8vo. 118 pages. B. W. Huebsch, Inc.
\$3.50.

IT is in a definitive manner that Walter Pach's book fixes the essential realities introduced into painting by the artistic evolution of the last hundred years. I do not know any other book which gives so just, so clear, and so exact an idea of the extraordinary movement in plastic art for which nineteenth-century France was the central focus and which the future will look upon with as much of admiration and of surprise as it will the Italian quattrocento and cinquecento. To select a special point, I can imagine nothing more perfect than the author's exposition of the line of continuity among ideas and techniques throughout the incomparable dynasty of the masters studied by him. If one adopt his idea that there was, every twenty years in France, a generation charged with revealing to the élite the latent forces concealed within the desires and the faculties of the multitude, all of his views assume for us the weight of irresistible evidence. And it is this idea, precisely, that we cannot avoid adopting, even if we know but slightly the work of these masters and the way in which their influence has extended to-day throughout the whole world. David, Ingres, Corot, and Delacroix, Courbet, Cézanne and Renoir, Seurat and Matisse, and Cubism stand like so many lighthouses marking the stages along the route of thought. The foreigners of greatest significance: Jongkind, Pissarro, Sisley, van Gogh, and Picasso, whatever their personal genius, have been unable to do other than enter this admirable movement, as iron filings go to a magnet. This is a fact for all those who have penetrated, behind the mask of the official schools and of fashionable reputations, to the true countenance of art. And another fact, to be established one day, is the constant parallelism of this

evolution of French painting with the philosophic and social life of the whole world.

The work of a generation, Walter Pach tells us, is not really understood before the coming of the generation which follows. Hence the resistances which meet it, hence also its own energy in affirming the totality of its victory, even when it is no longer there to behold it. He shows us that the explosion (the word is not too strong) of great French painting coincides exactly with the coming of democracy to the French people, which explains also, through the diffusion of bad taste and false culture, the special failure to comprehend that explosion. (How indeed, when the weather is fine and silence is everywhere, should an explosion do otherwise than surprise you?) It is easy, therefore, from the point at which we find ourselves, to situate and estimate its effects, as well as to fix their outer limits, one of which is the French Revolution and the other the World War, two formidable events that one must never lose sight of, if one wants to know the sources of modern art and to draw conclusions as to it. Walter Pach, I imagine, has written his book for those Americans, above all, who are beginning dimly to suspect the grandeur of the intellectual drama which has been going on in the Occident for over a century. But the American people has no need of the education which he is trying to bring to it: it is creating. It is creating and in every domain. It is inaugurating a grandiose energy in constructing, for which plastics is, precisely, an unexpected expansion, a new one, and one that is taking a direction unsuspected even by the first initiators of the great painting of France, but again one toward which their ideas conduct irresistibly: I am thinking of those colossal factories whose architectonic power and logic recall those of the Aztec and Egyptian temples. But if the American people can get along without the education here offered, the élite of America is demanding it, precisely because the American people is newer than the people of Europe and because its brain is aspiring to penetrate to the why of the growing organism which it expresses and to which it is, at the same time, giving order.

Thus it is that one cannot give too much importance to the famous movement of Cubism—prepared, says Walter Pach, by Odilon Redon, who is credited with having rehabilitated the vision of the inner world, and on this one point I am not entirely of his

opinion. In fact, Cubism in our day is attaining a conception of plastic construction in which only a very relative accounting for "nature" subsists, and thereby, clearly, it approaches the great architectural principles toward which the art of the engineers—and particularly the American engineers—is being directed. After the Impressionists' analysis of the elements of the object, and after the effort through which Cézanne and Renoir achieved a utilization of that analysis, Matisse in constructing with colour, Picasso with line, and Derain with form, have gradually substituted the plane of the mind for the objective plane so powerfully established by Courbet. The plastic elements alone remain objective, and not the objects, transported, as they are, to the plane of the mind where they evolve new combinations which the architect finds ready to his hand. We must renounce once for all, if not naturalism, at least that disastrous idea that the imitation of nature is the goal of the art of painting. The great problem of the present generation is to overcome that prejudice. It found in Oriental and African art an unshakable point of support for this essential conquest, which explains the immense favour which they enjoy in our day. And, through an admirable chain of inner circumstances which belongs to genius alone, it was the great classic and naturalistic French painters of the nineteenth century who prepared this field: hence the enormous influence which Delacroix exerted on his period, an influence which has not ceased to make itself felt, as a subterranean force, throughout Courbet's Naturalism, through the whole of Impressionism, through Post-Impressionism, and the powerful constructions of Cézanne and Renoir. Delacroix, Daumier, and Barye (the greatest sculptor that Europe has seen since Michael Angelo, as I think Walter Pach has said—and I know, in any case, that he thinks so, as I do) all of them, in their making from Romanticism a new incarnation of French Classicism, bind up the most solid tradition of European art with the contemporary revolution which must soon result in a new spiritual architecture. It is in this that I see the testament which Europe is passing on to her American heir.

Walter Pach shows clearly that the Occidental mind which, since the Renaissance, had not ceased to exert upon art an influence sometimes fruitful and sometimes disastrous, has finally, through respect and honesty toward itself, renounced the attempt to impose

its supremacy on art. A profound idea, recalling that of Nietzsche, discovering in morality, isolated from God by pure reason, the new function of destroying its own domination and bowing before the advent of the pessimistic and tragic reality of the mind. Art is regaining its veritable domain, which had been obscured by the Renaissance, despite the greatness of that period, a greatness manifested exclusively, it is true, through the genius and the energy of individuals. And art can furnish anew to the religious spirit of the world the power of communion which it demands in order to establish itself in depth and to extend in area. I must close here, fearing that my admiration for this book will sweep beyond the limits set for this article. We believe, Walter Pach and I, that the universe itself is a vast poetic ensemble for which art, in all its forms, is a sovereign language, and for which science is only one of the means.

ELIE FAURE

DELIGHT AND TEARS

THE APPLE OF THE EYE. By Glenway Wescott.
12mo. 292 pages. Lincoln Mac Veagh. The Dial
Press. \$2.50.

I SHALL not forget the feeling of astonishment and—shall I say?—well-being with which, some months past, I read the opening of Glenway Wescott's *Bad Han* when it appeared in *THE DIAL*.¹ Within three sentences Mr Wescott had established his mood, a mixture of ruggedness and lyricism. The abrupt change from these four lines to the name of his heroine served to clinch his effect. Here, in the purest sense, was action. For such movements, it seems to me, are the essence of action in art.

Mr Wescott's novel, *The Apple of the Eye*, is a continuation of the story *Bad Han* as it appeared in *THE DIAL*. The novel has a kind of tripartite arrangement, in each part the focus being placed upon a different character, while the parts are held together by certain parallelings and interactions of plot and emotion. The first part is the story of *Bad Han*; the second centres about the love-affair between a delicate young girl and a farm-hand whose wanderlust is temporarily quieted by his attachment to this girl. In this second part a young boy, Dan, has been brought into the story; the third part now settles upon this boy, but treats him in the light of the parts preceding. One feels the reward of Mr Wescott's method: the story does have a cumulative effect, and the ending is made richer by its strong reliance upon what has preceded.

All of which is very vague, and in no wise conveys the quality of Mr Wescott's story. It is a book almost exclusively of emotional propulsion. Indeed, it even becomes a drenching in emotions, those softer, readier emotions which we designate usually as "feminine," an experience purely of "delight and tears" (to borrow one of his chapter heads) and is thus a kind of revival in letters, an atavism, albeit a revival which is done with such force, such conviction, that one is caught unawares, and before he knows it is deeply involved in these partings (by death or locomotion),

¹ January and February, 1924.

this girl like wilted flower left to perish, these stutterings of love, the sleep-walking in the moonlight, the call, or lure, of the city over the hills and plains. The machinery of pathos is well utilized—which, once again, fails to convey the quality of the story, for it is so obvious that the author did not think in terms of the “machinery” of pathos. His book, if it makes few demands upon the intellectual equipment of the reader, is a profoundly appealing piece of emotional writing, or one might better call it an emotional *experience*, for the reader’s participation in the author’s plot is intense enough to leave him in possession of the story’s overtones much as one is left with the overtones of some dream or some actual event which has occurred in one’s own life.

The principal objection I find to Mr Westcott’s book is its failure to widen the field of our aesthetic perceptions. And I use the word “aesthetic” very broadly here, to signify simply all perceptions which engage what Goethe calls the *organs* of art. Such perceptions are of two categories: method, technique, discoveries of procedure within the medium itself; and the far more important discovery of symbols which adequately summarize for us the emotional and ideological complexities in which we are involved. In method, Mr Wescott’s chief contribution is the bringing of a greater and more sensitive vitality to a type of book in which the typical novelist could feel very much at home. In subject-matter, the author has re-seen for us certain stock figures and situations of the contemporary story, re-seen with a keener eye, but no new angle of vision.

Yet this in itself becomes a kind of virtue. Our latent familiarity with the mould sets us for it so perfectly, that when Mr Wescott does his act with such vigour we are able to follow him without a wrench. There is a point whereat the average suddenly transcends into the natural, and at times Mr Wescott seems rewarded by precisely this illumination, so that his book becomes something of a racial experience, adjusting itself with sensitiveness to our desires for both satisfaction and frustration. The greatest book ever written will probably be so for the same reason. And it is here that Mr Wescott is rewarded for having kept the commandments, and the law as the apple of his eye.

There are certain writers who, in addition to the absolute values of their work, have for me a sort of barometric interest. Such

writers, for instance, as Joyce, Eliot, or Cummings, always strike me as facing an issue, as being on the verge of some new decision. I speculate on what they will do next. I feel this way also with reference to Wescott. Will his next book be a continuation of his present one (*The Apple of the Eye* ends as the somewhat autobiographic hero leaves the farm for college, and thus it could be projected into further volumes of the same sort); or will it, in some form or other, suffer that strange critical deflection (an equivalent to epistemology in philosophy?) which has started so many modern artists through some personal migration parallel to Joyce's curve from *Dubliners* to *Ulysses*?

It might be said that if Mr Wescott chooses to repeat his present formula, we may expect him to repeat it with that creative vitality which he has already displayed. Yet the issue is much deeper; perhaps it is just as hard to-day to retain one's fire in the fidelity to artistic orthodoxy as is the case with religious or political orthodoxy. This is no mere accident; it is the result (both the flowering and the absurdity) of that modern specialized manner of living whereby art itself tends to become the predominant experience of the artist (his keenest hours being devoted to the perceptions of technical procedure and his weaker hours being left for the perceptions of life in general) so that he makes extensions and discoveries within his field of experience which are simply unseen by specialists in other fields who have not paralleled his experience.

But to return—Mr Wescott is of a much more highly critical temper than his first book would seem to indicate. He is, therefore, by no means immune from the *Dubliners*-to-*Ulysses* temptation. While on the other hand the brilliancy of his first book would certainly justify him in trying to develop in the avoidance of more specialized channels.

In any case, we may for the time being content ourselves with this opportunity to welcome a work of such keen emotional appeal and stylistic vigour as are displayed in *The Apple of the Eye*.

KENNETH BURKE

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

THE INQUISITION. A Political and Military Study of its Establishment. By Hoffman Nickerson. 8vo. 258 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$4.

THE cult of the Middle Ages, so far as English letters are concerned, began with the Romantic Revival, with that human incubator of cape-and-sword fiction, Sir Walter Scott. It would, however, be a mistake on the part of the modern mediaevalist and neo-Catholic to carp overmuch at Scott. He was a mere writer of serials, but each one was worth its weight in gold as reviving a certain attitude toward the mediaeval past which had its most sensational expression, a few years later, in the placid bosom of the Anglican Church, in the Oxford Movement. The founders of mediaeval romanticism, as applied to the Established Religion, turned their faces squarely toward the past as a Mohammedan toward the unknown Mecca. Protestantism was all wrong; so was Liberalism; the Reformation was an act of corporate treason to mankind; the whole modern and industrial world was out of joint, and it was clearly up to a few bright young men from Oxford to put it right again.

Up to that moment it had been universally held by intelligent spirits that the cause of religious toleration, so lately and hardly won, was one of the major victories of civilization. But the instinct of the mediaevalists was by no means for toleration. "It would be a great gain to this country," wrote Keble, "were it vastly more bigoted, more superstitious, more fierce in its religion than at present is the case." The shining and illustrious model of the whole Oxford school was, of course, the Unreformed Church. "*Incessit patuit Dea*," wrote Newman in a splendid passage, "the self-conquest of her Ascetics, the patience of her Martyrs, the irresistible determination of her Bishops, the joyous swing of her advance, both exalted and abashed me." Thus the idealization of the Middle Ages which began in the bookish dreams of a few poets and writers whose embroidered instinct loved simply.

"The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,"

became the serious business of clergymen and historians, colouring their politics and their religion, in brief, their whole attitude toward life.

Of course the dilemma of the High Church school was and still is obvious. It was not long before people began to say to them: "If you are so keen about the Church as it was under the supremacy of Rome, why on earth don't you go there?" Recently the Roman Church has had the dubious honour of converting Mr Chesterton, so long a perfect godsend to witty Anglican clerics. Sancho Panza is now of the same household of faith with his master, but, strange to say, the conversion has had no effect on his style which waddles as foolishly as ever in the wake of the far-famed Bellocian prose.

We have said enough to indicate that there does exist a school of people who see the Middle Ages almost completely *en rose* and the Catholic Church like "the great Vision of the guarded mount," glimpsed across weltering seas of misunderstanding, Protestantism, and modern industrial life. In the realm of publicism they have learned to call Socialism "the Servile State," and talk about the Guild System, a condition which it would be just about as possible to fasten upon modern society as it would be to reduce New York to the dimensions of Paris under Philippe Auguste. In poetry they write darling verses to our Lady Mary and the Gothic Rose. In ordinary life they compose books apologizing for the Inquisition, and evince an enormous veneration for the Person of the Lord and the sanctity of beer.

Mr Nickerson's book is an interesting example of this category. His attention was first drawn to religious interference with liberty by the efforts of Prohibition lobbyists in the days when he was a conscript father at Albany. He cast about for some parallel similar to the Prohibition Movement and found it in the Inquisition. After that there was only one thing to do, and that was to write a book about his discovery. But in the meantime, probably in the course of composition, a strange thing happened to the discovery. His hatred for Prohibition remained unabated, but . . . was it possible that he was beginning to feel, well not precisely an admiration, but a sort of fellow-feeling for the horrid phenomenon he had set out to

expose as similar to Prohibition and equally indefensible? If we are right in assuming such a development of Mr Nickerson's attitude, there were only two things to do. Either he could abandon his book, in which case a great deal of valuable time, not to say a genuine historical passion for his subject, would be wasted, or he could revise it with a double thesis to the end of proving that the Inquisition was, after all, a good thing in theory, and that Prohibition is wholly damnable. He chose the second alternative, not reflecting apparently that he has rather unskilfully combined in a single volume two theses which, if the author inclines ever so little to one, turn and rend each other.

The Inquisition, as everybody ought to know, was a corollary of the Crusade against the Manichaeans of the French Midi, those interesting heretics who believed, among other things, "that no one could sin from the navel downward." The military end of the business was carried out by the famous Simon de Montfort, a prig of the first Catholic water, whom Mr Nickerson might perhaps have assailed as a Puritan did not Mr Nickerson see all good things in the Middle Ages as Malebranche saw them all in God. Later, under the aegis of the Dominicans, the Inquisition began to interfere systematically with human freedom, availing itself of the use of torture. After reading Mr Nickerson's book twice through loyally, we cannot yet make out whether in effect he approves of this practice or not. All we can say is that the tone adopted by him in regard to this question is ambiguous and indulgent, and hence highly displeasing to the civilized mind. The total impression seems to be that torture can be minimized, if not excused, so long as it is practised in a good cause. Were one to inquire what Mr Nickerson means by a good cause he would probably reply: "The cause in which I believe." Thus a Puritan fanatic who utilized torture to wring from some convivial victim the admission that he had downed six highballs in three minutes would be an enemy of the human race, whereas the Catholic bishops under good Queen Mary Tudor who burned Ridley and Latimer because the latter sought to distinguish between Transubstantiation and the Real Presence, were meritoriously sustaining "the moral unity of Europe" or some such Bellocian phrase. From this dilemma there is really no escape for Mr Nickerson; the Marian bishops were upholding "the moral unity of Europe" every bit as much as Arnaut Amalric and the Bishop of

Beziers, while in the matter of personal ferocity they compare very favourably with the horrible old men who conducted the Albigensian Crusade. Either he must accept them all as choice and master architects of moral unity; or disavow them all as a gang of worthless fanatics, in which opinion we certainly concur.

The plain truth about all this, unobscured by that peculiar nuance of unction and bow-wow which is Mr Belloc's legacy to his literary disciples, is that all cruelty is unforgivable, and more than that, it never succeeds. The one tangible result of the Catholic persecutions under Mary is that England is a Protestant country to this day, to the great disgust of Mr Nickerson and his whole faction. Protestantism thrives on persecution; persecution is the only thing that would revive it to-day as a living force. People who practise physical cruelty whether to preserve "the moral unity of Europe," or to effect military discipline like the American officer who invented the water cure, are, in the sphere of their vile activities, plain sadists, perverts, whose disease is of such a nature that the doings usually falling under that term seem the merest bagatelles in comparison. And the thing that makes much of Mr Nickerson's attitude in this matter especially preposterous is that he himself is not even a member of the one religious body to-day which can be said to stand for moral unity, or for anything very definite. Speaking from the standpoint of the Church and period he so much admires, he is himself a Protestant, a heretic. Had he lived in 1535 he would have been forced to throw away "moral unity" altogether so that his descendants in 1924 could call themselves "Episcopalians by birth and Anglo-Catholics by preference." Or, had he stuck by the guns of moral unity, he would undoubtedly have shared the fate of Father Forrest, burned like a mere Protestant, because he could not understand how the first Anglican king could also be his own Pope. The experience would have been painful for all of Mr Nickerson's friends; but it certainly would have modified Mr Nickerson's own views upon the suitability of torture.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT

GULLIVER

THE WHITE OXEN. By *Kenneth Burke*. 12mo.
297 pages. *Albert and Charles Boni*. \$2.50.

THE motives for which men write have changed in emphasis, especially during the last thirty years. Once they became authors to perpetuate their dreams, record their observations and ideas, perhaps more simply out of vanity or empty purses. These reasons will always retain their force, but good writing to-day is regarded more and more as an adventure. We seek those territories of the imagination which lie across the border of the last formula. We are driven forward by a quotidian fever which Kenneth Burke likes to call "a perpetual grailism"; though perhaps a better comparison would be that of travellers, not like Columbus over real seas, but like Gulliver. A book like *The White Oxen* is a voyage of discovery, and its fifteen short stories mark the successive landings.

For this reason its unity cannot be one of attitude or method, which change continually; instead it has unity of direction. "I see these stories," Burke writes in a prefatory note, "as a gradual shifting of stress away from the realistically convincing and true to life; while there is a corresponding increase of stress upon the more rhetorical properties of letters. It is a great privilege to do this in an age when rhetoric is so universally despised." One might add that his progress is even more in the direction of a personal expression.

The volume opens with a novelette in the manner of Flaubert. The characterization is good, the construction without a flaw, but the story as a whole is almost completely anonymous. Flaubertian realism has become a commodity: any trained writer can manufacture it, and any editor, if he desires, buy it across the counter. Burke's reaction must have been something of the sort, for his next long story (Mrs Maecenas appeared some years ago in *THE DIAL*) is written with an aim of satire which is already beyond the limits of pure realism.

If one can distinguish between the terms, it might be said that

the method of the stories which follow Mrs Maecenas has changed from realism to accuratism. Though events are reported with a detail which becomes increasingly exact, the aim is no longer to make an image of life; but rather, through the combination of observed facts, to create another reality corresponding to nothing outside the author's mind. The naturalism of stories like David Wasserman is almost a pretence. At a certain point (on page 169, to be exact; near the end of *My Dear Mrs Wurtelbach*) he tires even of this pretence; gathering his puppets, he sweeps them into the wings and declaims from the centre of the stage, in his own voice.

The voice bears some resemblance to Dean Swift's; with the same note of irony, the same bitter understatements, and even little tricks of style in common. Of more significance is their feeling of the unclean and the clean. Swift, the neatest man that ever wrote English prose; the most careful, in his conversation, never to shock the ear, was driven by pure aversion to write pages as foul as any in our literature. He was outraged by the filthiness of human motives. "I hate and detest that animal called man," he wrote to Pope.

He adds, "although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth." Instead Burke's hatreds are directed at these individuals of the species: such "compleat gentlemen" as are described in *Portrait of an Arrived Critic*, or literary Don Juans like the Clarence Turner who serves as dubious hero for *The Death of Tragedy*. Their pretensions and mean niceties drive him to extremes like those of Swift, and his moral indignation is the same. "Let us erect," he says, "a dirty little monument to these intellectuals."

The resemblance is strongest in Mrs Wurtelbach and the four stories which follow. They are full of travellers, men without character, great recording eyes like Gulliver. These pilgrims wander into all four corners of the imagination. It was Yul who found a square city of grey granite, where people with grey eyes slipped in and out of the oblong holes which served as doors. Christ walked on Broadway; whereas Mr Dougherty, the financier, was lassoed from a window by Indians in aeroplanes, and carried off to be eaten on an island in the South Seas. None of these impossible adventures seems out of place, for each of them adds a quality demanded, in its particular place, by the structure and

movement of the story. This obviously is what the author meant when he referred to a progress away from the realistically convincing and toward "the more rhetorical properties of letters."

There is a stage in the career of every successful writer when he finds a medium which seems exactly suited to his equipment. Such was the fortune of Kenneth Burke in this group of later stories. His aim was to make them a sort of sophisticated lyric, and in this aim his success was complete. Still he remains unsatisfied. He casts about for other qualities: more depth, a clearer logic. Eager for new discoveries he moves on; he destroys his edifice of theory and moves on; "the Prince crashed a rock through their little house, and the three moved on across the face of the earth, across its nose, mouth, cheeks, and hair."

Prince Llan, coming at the end of the volume and described with incredible care, should be the greatest of Burke's characters; indeed he is not the least. He does interesting things, delivers speeches of a fine bluster, but he remains a shadow: somebody moving, in quest of some Olympus, from dreams into a dream. Two hundred pages or seven years before, the hero of Burke's first story, after suffering the depths of tragedy, looked up: he saw the hills beyond the river, the cloud over the last hill, and felt suddenly that his life still lay before him. The end of Prince Llan is to go wandering down corridors in a half-sleep, till having pushed open a last door with the remnant of his forces, he catches the glimpse of another corridor, another door.

It is the close not merely of Prince Llan's adventures, but of a cycle in the life of his author. Burke can write adventure stories or psychological novels; abandon fiction for poetry or metaphysics; go Dada or Gaga, but his grailism makes him incapable of going back. The virtue of *The White Oxen* is to be unique; not even its own author could write it again. Meanwhile the great lump of the country rolls on, "with Howard swiping apples out of the cellar, and a high-school sophomore pimpled with pubescent love, and elderly men dressed up to apply for jobs, and unexecuted rapes . . . half-ambitions . . . fractional insights . . . while as for Clarence Turner, his book—thank God!—had already reached its eighth edition."

MALCOLM COWLEY

BRIEFER MENTION

WITHIN A BUDDING GROVE, by Marcel Proust (2 vols., 12mo, 752 pages; Seltzer: \$5). Mr Scott Moncrieff's English translation of *A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs* satisfies us as completely as did his translation of *Du Côté de Chez Swann*. Mr Moncrieff follows each tergiversation, each intellectual involution of his hyper-sensitive master with all the devotion and accuracy of a neophyte recording upon a virginal tablet the priceless utterances of some High-Priest of Beauty. To a lover of literature who still has before him the princely pleasure of reading the work of Marcel Proust for the first time the two volumes of *Within a Budding Grove* will be found more precious than a scarlet heap of red May-tree petals held out to him in the ivory cup of a young girl's hand.

SO BIG, by Edna Ferber (12mo, 360 pages; Doubleday: \$2). The heroine of Miss Ferber's latest best-seller is the daughter of a gambler and the wife of a truck-farmer and becomes in good time the mother of a banker. She had vainly hoped, for her son, a bigness not of the checking account, but of the spirit. Miss Ferber appears to be more astonished at the phenomenal success of her book than is her heroine at that of her small-souled son. Is the author unaware that a facile naturalism is greatly in vogue, that her pictures of Chicagoan society are equal to the best the *Saturday Evening Post* can provide, and that she puts no strain on either the emotional or the intellectual equipment of her very gentle readers?

THE PITIFUL WIFE, by Storm Jameson (12mo, 336 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) takes its place among novels of enduring value—among those in which the fundamental stuff of human relations is handled with a sustained and moving vision. Miss Jameson writes with eloquence and maturity; her people—projected against a background admirably contrived—are drawn with vitality, in a work which has every evidence of careful thinking. Surface emotions play a small part in this romance; it is a creation reflecting the craftsmanship of a genuine artist.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, by J. Anker Larsen, translated by Arthur G. Chater (12mo, 379 pages; Knopf: \$3) which received in Denmark a prize of fourteen thousand dollars, is an old-fashioned novel in which the spiritual development of a large group of persons is followed from infancy to maturity or death. The numerous faces, in spite of vigorous characterization, merge in a dim composite face, as they do in one of Rembrandt's guild pictures. The author has not constructed his book about a single protagonist, but shifts illogically from character to character, revealing the introspection of each. Since *The Philosopher's Stone* deals with the occult, this loose procedure is doubly unsatisfactory. It records an aspiration toward unearthly orderliness and harmony, but fails in almost every respect to be orderly or harmonious.

SAINT JOAN, A Chronicle Play in Six Scenes and An Epilogue, by Bernard Shaw (12mo, 163 pages; Brentano: \$2.25). Like Tolstoy, Mr Shaw willingly sinks the artist in the teacher, though unlike the great Russian he seems to prefer teaching the primary classes. To upper-class students the continual dragging in of morals is as irritating as the too-conscious translation of ancient speech into contemporary slang. Nevertheless, Mr Shaw has a way with him and however difficult it may be to read his books twice, he at least compels the whole world to read them once.

THE DIFFERENCE AND OTHER POEMS, by Harriet Monroe (12mo, 123 pages; Covici-McGee: \$2) are very delicate ambrosia. Coming from an editor whose prose can be so biting and swift, they will surprise those expecting fermented wine or spectacular display of poetic fireworks. Though the verse is not showy the gentle charm of nature and people is expressed in pastel imagery, often exquisite, and a use of free verse almost anecdotal in its casualness and whimsicality. So delicately articulated a structure is always in some danger of breaking down, as in parts of the Prado, a most interesting experiment.

A BASKET OF POSES, by George S. Chappell, pictures by Hogarth, Jr. (illus., 4to, 109 pages; Albert & Charles Boni: \$2). Amusing *vers-de-société*. Mr Chappell is one of our cleverest makers of light verse and Mr Rockwell Kent, here disguised as "Hogarth, Jr.," proves a worthy accompanist. Very few of the passing metropolitan enthusiasms of the day escape these burlesquers and so the volume, in its way, attempts history.

THE LOWERY ROAD, by L. A. G. Strong (12mo, 143 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$1.75). Although abounding in that which is ethically valuable, exhibiting now and then a vivid, gracious aspect of the natural world, or a facet of mental significance, these poems present unpoetic analogies and mixed symbolism which are disaffecting, a choice of subject too frequently superficial, and workmanship which is with few exceptions, conspicuously undisciplined.

STORM IN HARVEST, by Edward Steese (12mo, 93 pages; Brick Row Book Shop: \$1.50). At least one of these poems appeared in the London Mercury, and all of them are in the manner of the Georgian, or landscape, school of poets. The author is a Princeton undergraduate. He writes capably, to easy melodies, but risks no phrases which are new, profound, felicitous, or awkward enough to lift his first volume out of the commonplace.

HOUSE OF GHOSTS, by John Grimes, introduction by Vincent Starrett, decoratively interpreted by James Cady Ewell (12mo, 75 pages; Robert O. Ballou: \$2). A sensitive assertiveness, precise vision, and philosophic hardihood characterize these poems, the which while not evincing a superlatively trained mind nor faultless craftsmanship, are indubitably the product of high intelligence and literary gift. The book, fastidiously made and printed, is, in its inclusion of certain concentratedly felicitous compositions, not one of those indifferent excellences which one respects and does not read, but an instant and rewarding companion.

MOODS OF EARTH AND SKY, by E. L. Grant Watson (12mo, 223 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). Here is a book that certainly whets our appetite for more and for better writing in this fascinating *genre*. Dignified, accurate, full of a grave leisureliness, these little sketches approach the fringe of a literature of a lasting order. That they do not quite reach that margin seems due to a certain honourable stiffness in the author's sensibility. He is capable of large and noble reactions to the punctual procession of English seasons, following one another across English landscapes. In his freedom from jocosity, from egotism, from every sort of affectation, in his austerity and his reserve, he satisfies our most exacting demands as to what such writing ought to be. A little more imaginative daring, a little more originality, and such pages would undoubtedly have a long life.

ARIEL: THE LIFE OF SHELLEY, by André Maurois; translated by Ella D'Arcy (12mo, 335 pages; Appleton: \$2). Impatience with this ultra traditional, heedlessly translated life of Shelley, is moderated by an occasional eloquently imaginative conceit, a sometimes acute adjective, and a number of justly tart comments upon human behaviour. The narrative is firm, continuous, actual; wish to as one may, however, it is impossible to attribute to this Ariel of the biographer—"the Beauteous Harriet's 'doctrinaire husband'" "discussing some profound question or other"—capacity for artistry, elevation of spirit, or passion for thought.

DING DONG BELL, by Walter de la Mare (12mo, 79 pages; Knopf: \$1.75) is quite unworthy of the genius of Walter de la Mare. One never imagined that this poet's writing could fall under a suspicion of vulgarity, but this small volume comes perilously near it. How can Mr de la Mare make jocular allusions to Mrs Grundy, to umbrellas, to goggles, after quoting such memorable passages from the old masters as are to be found on the first few pages of his book? Is the familiar Chestertonian manner to invade the work of the few real artists left amongst us? A train passes full of school children. "They were chaunting at intervals" writes Mr de la Mare, "the profoundest question Man can address to the Universe: Are we downhearted? No?" The epitaphs of course form the best part of the book, but even these are disappointing. Why quote at all those few great words of John Wyclif "Crist sparid not to visyte pore men . . . in the colde grave" if they are to be followed by such trivial doggerel as is here presented?

MODERN FRENCH MUSIC, by Edward Burlingame Hill (12mo, 406 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$4) based upon a series of Lowell Lectures, is an encyclopaedic study of French composers since César Franck. Essentially (and admirably) informative rather than critical, Professor Hill's enthusiasm implies a Golden Age. The book would have been more pleasing to a literary palate if it had been salted with an occasional distaste; and one is convinced that mutually exclusive opposites could not please the same listener so unreservedly if his sensibility were ideally keen; but with its scrupulous dates and generous lists of compositions, it is an invaluable book of reference.

In examining the **TENDENCIES OF MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA** (8vo, 320 pages; Scribner: \$3) Mr A. E. Morgan does more than give a lucid, lively account of the themes, the fables and the heroes of British and Irish dramatists from the early Victorians to the latest of the Georgians. His meaty chapters, especially those on Shaw, on *The Drama of Revolt*, and on *More Poets*, present, what is so often lacking in such histories as this, a point of view and a point of attack. Mr Morgan, as he himself says of Mr Shaw, "has an almost unequalled faculty for seizing the kernel of truth out of the thoughts of others." And, again like Mr Shaw, he is no "mere philosophic anthologist," but a creatively-minded critic. His book, while not to be swallowed whole, is tonic for playwrights, their critics and their public.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND AESTHETICS, by Charles Baudouin, translated by Eden and Cedar Paul (8vo, 328 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$4). Here the author studies the images in Verhaeren's poems and gives them a fuller content by showing their origin in Verhaeren's psychological development; that is, he considers the poem as a "waking dream" and applies the psychoanalytic mechanism to its interpretation, tracing how Verhaeren's internal conflicts took substance in his art. But he does not show wherein the poet's substance in turn affects his readers, wherein a symbol ceases to be individual and becomes universal—while it is precisely here that psychology might contribute most to aesthetics. Yet M Baudouin himself is so aware of the present breach between psychology and criticism (between "existential judgements" and "judgements of value") that he seems, of all psychoanalysts, the one most likely to formulate that general logic of the emotions which should pass with greatest justice under the title of *Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics*.

DEMOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP, by Irving Babbitt (12mo, 349 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3) is a study of the present collapse of political idealism, with an extended affirmation of a personal "will to refrain" as the means of salvation. Professor Babbitt advocates, in the interest of humanism, almost the same discipline with which the Pauline epistles answered the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" The book is both an historic survey and an argument; the survey does not seem perfectly impartial, and the argument rests more heavily upon professorial logic than upon the contagion of brilliance; his humanism is Socratic, but he is scarcely a Socrates. That the present state of affairs is bad does not in itself demonstrate that Professor Babbitt's remedies are divinely inspired. His rather drab prophetic zeal may move minds as cultivated as his own; but it is difficult to conceive how a chilly, scholarly loftiness can effect the popular foolhardiness and inertia which have horrified him into writing this book.

THE LOGIC OF CONDUCT, by James MacKaye (12mo, 486 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3) is a novel and excellent book of philosophy. Its dialogue form is inspired by Plato, and part of its content by Bentham; but its conciseness and practicability, as well as the free inquiry it initiates and progressively satisfies by profound reasonableness, are eminent achievements of the author's.

THE THEATRE

EXHIBIT A this month is Mr Alexander Woolcott, dramatic critic of *The Sun*. Mr Woolcott has the gift of enthusiasm and seems to think that Sir James Barrie's *MARY ROSE* is the finest flight of the imagination recorded in the English language since Shakespeare wrote *THE TEMPEST*. Of *THE SECOND MRS TANQUERAY* he wrote that Miss Ethel Barrymore "is so stirring and so fine in its familiar crises that, by the force of her indisputable power, 'The Second Mrs Tanqueray' becomes again what it was in the beginning, is now, and may never be again—a play you all must see."

It was in the beginning a bright play—in comparison with a deal of dulness then prevalent; the brightness has worn off, and Pinero's most famous play (woefully inferior to *THE GAY LORD QUEX*) shifts from stupidity to claptrap and back again, with appropriate grating of the gears. It is produced very badly by Mr Hopkins: loudly and heavily. Messrs Lionel Pape and G. P. Huntley do all that can be done to make us believe that Cayley Drummle wasn't sent down to second table from any one of Oscar Wilde's plays and that Sir George Orreyed isn't the dullest drunkard in the world. Margot Kelly, too, struggles against a banal part; the rest of the cast doesn't even struggle. The second act is cheap and pointed vulgarity, and this Miss Barrymore did as if with relief from the drama of the first and, by instinct, of the last. It is all deplorably dull and unaffecting, its moral problem smothered in cheap dramatics. Apart from the second act nothing Miss Barrymore did had the slightest grace, the slightest interest. The whole production is, to quote again, "a play that you all must see" in order to believe that it is as bad as it is said to be, and in order to measure how far beyond that sort of drivel even our second-best playwrights have gone.

Exhibit B is a fatuity of my own, but I spare myself the pain of quoting verbatim. Sufficient that after the first invasion of Broadway by *SHUFFLE ALONG* and its followers, I wrote that these negro shows had a great deal to teach the more hardened Broadway

producers, but that they would always lack the sophistication and the technical skill in production of, say, Ziegfeld's FOLLIES. THE CHOCOLATE DANDIES (a good show of the type) fails to show me wrong; but DIXIE TO BROADWAY, in which Florence Mills is starred, makes me out a fool. Still, I wrote what I hoped even more than what I thought; and although DIXIE TO BROADWAY is a fine show, its best things are not essentially of the FOLLIES type, and its worst ones are. Even Miss Mills is set to singing a quite uninteresting song about Dixie Dreams which becomes tolerable only when the chorus begins to warble and catcall over the melody; even the ancient induction scene, entitled this time, The Evolution of the Colored Race, with tableaux, recurs; and there is a tedious wedding which spoils a good tune. The chorus is much better dressed, the overalls are cut down to pants and are of silk, the elaboration of the whole is mighty close to the Music Box and the New Amsterdam; the high-yallers are positively pink and cream. In the end it doesn't matter, for there is superb dancing, and Cora Green's singing, and a good orchestra playing good jazz, and Florence Mills ever so much her hard and arrogant and irresistible self. Indeed she seems much funnier, much more of a cut-up now, than ever; and her grotesque dancing and even the way she walks are full of boundless energy and a smart grace.

No one else, apparently, can make a chorus so interesting; but Earl Carroll comes closest, perhaps because he employed Dumb Doras (the voiceless beauties who walk intensely off and on) perhaps because he hasn't cared a hang about making his VANITIES polite. He uses the stage of the Music Box to much greater advantage than Hassard Short who had it for three years and did everything with it except make it interesting. John Murray Anderson's GREENWICH VILLAGE FOLLIES are more intelligent, but they are also duller; and Moran and Mack who are as good as ever aren't equal to Joe Cook who doesn't surpass himself as a grand total, but who has new bits of fun which are in his private vein of madness, extremely attractive.

GILBERT SELDES

MODERN ART

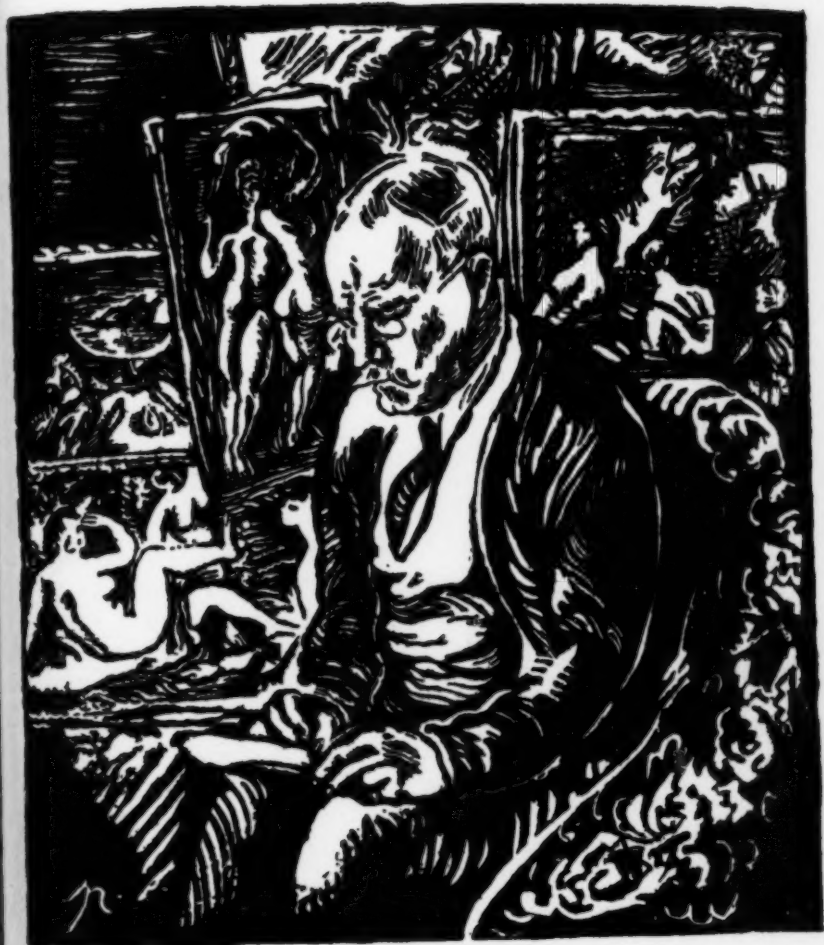
THAT not too-extraordinary female with the preposterous name who comes into bloom in the early pages of *L'Ile des Penguins*, the novel, I have always insisted, that was the true cause of the great war, God, when he had read it, recognizing that all the beans of this particular period had been spilled, and saying, with a shrug of his shoulders, "well then, let it happen"—that not too-extraordinary female, I say, who was seized and ravished by the leading cave man of the period and so struggled for by subsequent cave men that she became the first figure of fashion in history, must have struck all the readers of the book as a supreme symbol of the persistence of all things good and evil, both quick and dead, in this world. There was no getting to the end of her. Even in the ominous days of 1910 and thereabout, when lips were painted, eyelashes reinforced with some gluey black substance, and not a bit of simple nature was left anywhere in the world, she lingered, so Anatole France said, in the boudoirs of the demoiselles, in the shape of gilded, or perhaps enamelled, statuettes. Even the cubists did her. As a tradition she was unkillable.

The Academy, our New York Academy, has not been going so long as St Orberosia, but I vow I begin to believe, now she may. There is a temptation, after such an association of ideas, to refer to the Academy as "she." But whether a "she" or an "it," I was amused to notice last spring that our Academy had taken on a new lease of life, and this, in a rather remarkable manner that deserves notice here, as a principle seems indicated that may have a wider application. The Academy for a long while had been creaking at the joints. It felt its age terribly. In spite of having money in its purse sufficient for its own sustenance and in spite of being the dispenser of considerable cash prizes it seemed to cut less and less figure in the world and the annual sales of the so-called works of art on display diminished almost to the vanishing point. Several reasons might be adduced for this change of fortune, but the first one, doubtless, was that the Academy, since the appearance upon the scene of the Society of Independents, could no longer claim to be the arbiter of the destinies of young artists. Besides

there were too many clever dealers in art alive to the fact that the public was interested in the new forms if the Academy wasn't. The brilliant artists that the *intelligentsia* talked about were to be found outside the fold. From this it was but a short step to the feeling that it was compromising to show at the Academy at all and positively fatal to gain one of those tainted prizes. This was the status until last winter. But along towards spring Academicians began to exchange significant glances with each other and to appear in public more frequently and with more confidence than before. Upon investigation, it appeared that a large streak of luck had come their way.

Business, big business, had come to their aid. The Grand Central Galleries in the great railway terminal were avowedly founded to bring the new business principles to the sale of art. There were to be no preferences among the schools, the salesmen said at first, but all kinds of art were to be sold. The reason why works of art were not selling, it was explained, was, simply, that the public had not had its attention called to art. They would see that art and the public were brought together. There was much scoffing at first, naturally. Strangely enough the loudest scoffers were the regular dealers in art. Finally a truce of sorts was established, the new galleries were opened and found to be excellent as galleries, and the pictures on the walls were, laughably enough, the very works that the poor Academy had been struggling to sell for years. The "new" art was notable for its absence and some say this absence is a story in itself, but not for me, since genuine talent is so usually put through all the tests of hardship that one can no longer be surprised at tales of exclusion, and besides my concern for the moment is merely in the processes of selling art, for in this matter the Grand Central Galleries immediately proceeded to enlighten me.

The attack upon the public was not a frontal attack, but, as General Pershing might say, a flank movement. It seems that some of the Grand Central Galleries had had affiliations with a town in Illinois, called Aurora. Perhaps they were born there. At any rate they knew the place well and its inhabitants, and pulled off the sort of thing we came to know during the war as a "drive." So many people of Aurora were cajoled into buying paintings that it became a news item that was used in all the papers in the land and Aurora in return was so flattered at being in this way placed "on



HENRY MCBRIDE. BY JULES PASCIN

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the map," at being held up as a centre of light, that she gave a grand banquet in her best hotel to the enterprising seller of the pictures. I am told that the mayor and other chief personages of Aurora attended this festivity, that the walls of the hotel were lined for the occasion with a fresh lot of academic canvases, and that the announcement that a second "drive" had resulted in a still more memorable sale of art to Aurorans was greeted with cheers. When news of the event sifted back East the sceptics refused to grow excited and said that these Westerners can do anything with their home towns and that the affair was just a fluke.

However, late last spring, an advance was made upon another outlying point and just as great a success was reported. This time Atlanta, Georgia, was put upon the map. This city, it may be remembered, had been flattered into a state of wakefulness, by annual visits of the Metropolitan opera, the only Southern city so favoured, so there was already an element of pride to work on. With a whoop and an hurrah the Grand Central Galleries descended upon Atlanta, Georgia. There was again, I believe, a banquet with a mayor at it, a large collection of academic pictures, and a "drive." This time some of the artists assisted in person. A private car, lent by a sympathetic magnate, conveyed them from New York to Atlanta, and there were little addresses by the actual men whose names signed the canvases. Atlanta, like Aurora, fell heavily. Many, many pictures were sold for very respectable prices indeed, the artists who made the addresses being those who sold most.

Now all this is most illuminating. I have not attempted to colour the tale with mirth. Indeed if there is a joke connected with the affair it certainly is not upon the Grand Central Galleries, is it? And far be it from me to make a mock of human nature as it is practised in these United States. The idea, however, has not been patented. Its success, as has been said, has rejuvenated a number of old Academicians, but there's nothing to prevent its being applied in what I must consider a more practical direction. What a crimp, for instance, would be put in Atlanta's pride, were a car-load of our most modern artists to descend upon the mayor and chief hotel-parlours of Birmingham or some other rival Southern town!

HENRY McBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

WE have recently made an important discovery guaranteed original. It seems there exists in America a secret political organization, The League for the Preservation of Inferior Material, and that it is already vaster in size than the Ku Klux Klan can ever hope to become. For whereas the membership of the Klan is prelimited by the crystalline idea of its founders to the number of citizens whose veins run demonstrable red white and blue, The League for the Preservation of Inferior Material is not so cruelly exclusive. It is open to all persons residing within our borders; at the present writing it includes the vast majority of the inhabitants, and seems destined shortly to include them to a man. One is born to membership, indeed. Membership is in the blood. We consider this great discovery one of major importance, particularly because of the misery it is certain to abolish. No longer will the great number of events occurring within our borders torment us with unanswerable "wherefores": "why in the name of Sam Heck must everything go so stupid, so wasteful, so vulgar, so nasty, so destructive a way?" The existence of the League explains everything. It explains why all things whose plasm retains a little moisture have so difficult a time surviving here, and perish so quickly. It explains why an entire nation is the stuff for satire. Are you crushed by the newspapers and what they broadcast? Does it sicken you that magazines begin by supporting what is still in the process of formation and therefore interesting, and then turn stodgy and support what is already arrived and complete? Are you outraged at seeing Sunday literary sheets, built up into something halfway fresh by Burton Rascoe, turned over to Stuart P. Sherman and become a Ladies' Home Journal overnight? You have but to say "The League for the Preservation of Inferior Material," and all is well again as after some perfect musical cadence.

It was during the festival inaugurating Chickering Hall on Fifty-seventh street, the evening devoted to the compositions of Mr Leo Sowerby, that the great Knowledge came on us. The music of Mr Leo Sowerby, it is not unknown, is not precisely full of merit. The Time Spirit has cruelly neglected making his home in this

serious young man. His compositions are a sort of heavy-handed musical rhetoric developed from MacDowell and Debussy: the melody and rhythm somewhat Peterborough, the harmony more Parisborough. Not a few "Poissons d'or" go over the falls in Mr Sowerby's Cascades. Sometimes it appears that an English folk-tune has heard Petrushka. If in one of Mr Sowerby's songs, The Sea Bird to the Wind, an authentic musical sensation records itself in the brilliant treble music which commences the piano accompaniment, the life quickly fades into the prevailing rhetoric; and the vapid sonata for piano and cello is quite outside anything real. An Intellectual born. Our immediate impulse was to say "See here, old man, this really will not do. Do you know, you are fooling yourself? You're just diddling along." But long before the words were plain in us, we found ourselves quite dissuaded of making the attempt to speak. It occurred to us that Mr Sowerby had been offered the American Academy's three-year Prize of Rome, and having rejected it had been made the recipient of a two-year prize created specially for him; that it was he who had been chosen among young Americans to inaugurate the Chickering music-room with an evening of compositions; and what reason was there to believe that the perpetuation of Mr Sowerby's daydream was not a national concern and hence unhinderable? There seemed to be a secret conspiracy to help work of the sort of which his was, perhaps, an ideal and exalted example. The encouragements, honours, distinctions, prizes went to it; the authors of the superior sort were either starved or exiled or broken. There were always plenty of professors to go on committees and crown it lord of all: indeed no work was so tawdry that you could not get some professor, William Lyon Phelps at the very least, to contribute his benediction. It is obvious the American feels comfortable only in the presence of inferior materials and a jerry-built universe; probably his stock was archaic long before it quit the European continent. Of course, a League for the Preservation of Inferior Material situated entirely in the unconsciousness of a nation and operating as a sort of reflex, is a little hard to conceive. But since individuals remain happily unconscious of the motives of many of their most decisive actions, why should one not be permitted to conceive a community conducting its principal business quite as innocently and economically?

PAUL ROSENFELD

COMMENT

"He who builds a factory builds a temple, and he who works there worships there."

Calvin Coolidge

MR WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS in that engaging account of his recent visit to Stockholm which it was our honour to publish—under the happy, the nobly vowelled and nobly Yeatsian title, *The Bounty of Sweden*—bestowed praise upon the Town Hall of Stockholm. Mr Yeats also wrote:

"I think of but two comparable buildings, the Pennsylvania Terminus in New York, and the Catholic Cathedral at Westminster, but the Pennsylvania Terminus, noble in austerity, is the work of a single mind elaborating a suggestion from a Roman Bath, a mind that supported by the American deference to authority has been permitted to refuse everything not relevant to a single dominating idea. . . . The Catholic Cathedral is of equal, or greater magnificence in general design, and being planted in a country where public opinion rules, where the subscribers to every fund expect to have their way, is ruined by ignoble decoration, the most ignoble of all planned and paid for by my countrymen."

Our esteemed contemporary, *The New York Times*, quoted these two sentences, and commented upon them, interestingly, as follows:

"Since when did 'American deference to authority' become, as Mr Yeats's casual reference to it implies, a matter of common knowledge? Most of our foreign critics and commentators deny to us that quality altogether.

"And, while Mr Yeats was talking about New York railway terminals, why did he not mention another which also was the work of a single mind, or at any rate of a single group of minds, which also was 'permitted to refuse everything not relevant to a

single dominating idea'—the idea of making a railway station and not an imitation, close or remote, of a Roman bath?"

Do we then find ourselves empaled upon the horns of a formidable dilemma? Must we either repudiate the observation of the most distinguished of living practicers of the Art of English Poesy, or must we repudiate the judgement of those other "foreign critics and commentators," among whom there have been, one is aware, also men of distinction? I believe this dilemma to be illusory.

In those matters about which one really cares one is willing and able to halter that Hydra-necked Egotism which in more trivial matters one allows its heads. One is willing to apply this halter not only to the extent of curbing one's tongue, of checking one's more impulsive and less pertinent self; one is willing to go the whole hog: one is willing to stand aside and let the things "about which one really cares" be administered by the man who knows how. When undergoing a major operation one does not insist upon having one's own finger on the knife. In the stock exchange one does not refuse a valid tip because it emanates not from one's own prized intuition. Whenever one's affairs necessitate travelling in a railway train, one does perforce consent to bate, if grudgingly, one's individual *hauteur*; anyhow to the extent of not insisting upon the location of one hand about the locomotive throttle.

So peoples, like individuals, bow, when they find it worth while, their proud necks. The Spaniard, noble and innocent barbarian that he was, took the Christian Faith to heart. And he handed over direction in this matter to men competent: he employed the Office of the Holy Inquisition. The German, noble and innocent barbarian that he was, took the Patriotic Faith—a, to be sure, definitely less engaging and imaginative myth than the superseded Christianity—to heart. And he entrusted direction in this matter to men efficient: he acquiesced in the hegemony of the Kingdom of Prussia. Men had fought the Wars of Religion: men learned to fight the Wars of Nationalism. And since Religion no longer mastered their hearts, men progressed to Religious Tolerance: and since Nationalism now mastered their hearts, men progressed from the Cultural Tolerance of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Cen-

turies to the barbed-wire encooped, head-in-the-sand Domestic Ostrichism of to-day.

Now the Ego of the American People is indeed signally Hydra-necked. Armed by the intellect and will of abandoned Europe, we have made short work of the relatively unarmed savage aborigines; likewise of the only casually armed Forces of Nature. The intellect of Europe has in these things—as would God it might in all things—triumphed. And the boy who pressed the button—the American People—is, not surprisingly, much set up. It has become with him A Matter of Faith that all things are, by A Divine Dispensation, provided with, and subject to, small round shiny buttons. And it is his to press, *ad lib*.

Now there is no point in choking down one's Ego when oneself—as well as the next gent or gal—can press the button. Rather permit her long necks to wobble; rather permit them to coruscate in the glad sunlight. There is here a space for everyone; and a space for everyone to stretch and simmer.

America, for all her savage inhibitions and her piteous taboos, to the average man or woman spells to-day, as she spelled three centuries ago, LIBERTY. Not always, perhaps, free play for the natural instincts; not always, certainly, free play for the honest mind. But—as the aborigines and their continent have been progressively mowed down—an open field to that Vital Vanity—*élan vital*, I imagine, M Bergson would, with French tact, call it—that Vital Vanity which, alike from the study of human history and from the study of human psychology, would appear to be the central, tough, Superlatively and Indomitably Colloid Neck of Man. And in America, where this has reared unharnessed—unconverted to that end to which, being but rightly subjected to the solvent of intellect, this force is best capable of conversion, unconverted to the impersonal heightening and acceleration of Art and Science—in America Vanity has waggled unrestrained.

This Vital Vanity, genus *Americanus*, having been initially swollen by the easy conquest of an, under the circumstances, easy thing, *id est*, an unprepared continent, has, by force of that inertia latent in every moving body, persisted in the identical track of increasingly even less resistance—the track of material conquest. It has, understandably, taken no chances on *humanizing*—or indeed in any other wanton fashion *complicating*—so God-sent a simple

and natural fairway. This Vital Vanity now at last emerges, now at last harnessed—or shall I not in this instance rather say *caparisoned*?—in the direct-drive mechanism of Universal Finance.

And here in this activity which in America has swallowed all others (and precisely because it *has*—and so intransigently—swallowed absolutely everything else worth swallowing) here we at last discover the dream of the Philosophers—the dream of the Holy Saints, too, in a different way—perfectly, ay, *blessedly*, consummated: an absolute, an incorruptible, unit of value, a unit implying the transmutation of *all* values through and to it, has been—and by the simple abrogation of what we had hitherto envisaged as *Humanity*—quietly achieved. THE DOLLAR IS.

Where in a less naïve Barbarism—or Civilization, if you will—Vital Vanity is always obfuscated, and indeed restrained, by the multifarious branchings of disparate interests and values, here that mill-race—of Universal Finance, that mill-race swollen by Vital Vanity—wholly functions; every drop of it. Oneself—a drop of power—has but to sit tight. One shall most certainly emerge the clear singing of an elect cog.

Yet should victory—by some inverse miracle—*not* crown desert, there sit always ready the Ford Car and the Fourth of July. In America noise is the loyal anodyne, the stalwart asylum, of worldly defeat: in this element the last shall be first. We can boast a continent whereon all may try to make money, and whereon all may succeed in making noise. . . . And what element more happily tempered than this latter to the continued prosperous subsistence of such particles of that same Vital Vanity as have, by inverse miracle, evaded the saving channel of Universal Finance?

Is it any wonder that we hold the good name of Enemies of Authority, a good name we hacked out for ourselves as Puritans and Pioneers, a good name we keep sonant somewhat otherwise? *In no other realm than the financial are we sufficiently engaged to care intensely whether we succeed or not.* If the Religious Life does not matter, why recognize the Supremacy of the Church? If the Political Life does not matter, why support the Centralization of Government? If the Social Life does not matter, why foster the Refinement of Manners? If the Sexual Life does not matter, why cherish the Significance of Love? If the Intellectual Life does not matter, why respect the Freedom of Thought? In

all these things—and they comprise everywhere but in America most things—we are indeed not deferent to authority. "Live and let live," we observe, easily.

Thus "our foreign critics and commentators," habituated to the consideration of a culture under these categories, constate no deference to authority.

But the poet Yeats, dealing not in categories, felt and saw our deference. And among men and women of his sort—among sensitive people, that is—"American deference to authority" is "a matter of common knowledge." For Americans are—like other people—in the affairs that matter to themselves only too ready to lay down their proud necks before authority. Thus we behold, it having been established by the most eminent Medical Experts that hard drink is not, take it by and large, a BUSINESS ASSET, there has been inscribed above the thronged gateways of ten thousand American factories these authoritative words: "*Abandon all hard drink, ye workmen who enter here!*" And the workmen, honouring business, obey. Thus we behold, it having been established by the most eminent Efficiency Experts that bobbed hair is not, take it by and large, a BUSINESS ASSET, there has been inscribed above the thronged gateways of ten thousand American department stores these authoritative words: "*Abandon all bobbed hair, ye saleswomen who enter here!*" And the saleswomen, honouring business, obey. Thus we behold, it having been established by the most eminent Engineering Experts that Gothic cathedrals are not, take them by and large (it has been found impractical to run railroad tracks up their towers) a BUSINESS ASSET, there has been inscribed above the thronged gateways of ten thousand American railroad presidents' exceeding private offices these authoritative words: "*Abandon all Gothic cathedrals, ye architects who enter here!*" And the architects, honouring business, obey.

These railroad presidents themselves have in their turn obtained their authority because in the field of their work—a field so central to the whole system of Universal Finance—efficiency is essential; and because in any such activity of a corporate nature authority is, for efficiency, requisite. And the men who have squeezed up to be railroad presidents have the sense to like clean jobs, too: and they know better than to think they can get clean jobs if the men charged therewith have not single authority.

And because in a society which is at once enormous, and enormously and avidly commercialized, the interlockings of the business life are so multitudinous; therefore in such a social system *every business field* becomes almost equally central. And in America you will find, *in all business affairs*, deference to the man on top.

Now what about the architecture of our churches? Vulgar imitations, ignorant backslidings, from the Middle Age. Of our universities? Degraded adaptations—as if to house an infinity of Yale Dictaphones and Harvard Classics—from the Renaissance. Of our drawing-rooms? Either blatant heapings of the mutually disgusting, or that summary and forthright dismissal of all social life termed “period.” Of our state and federal buildings? Chicago World’s Fair . . . And in all these things every widow, every graduate, every salesman (called increasingly “interior decorator”), and every tax-payer and politician has one finger. . . . Why in folderols Authority?

But where were the Great Historic Fortunes of our Great Heroic Period hauled in? Where did those words *Vanderbilt, Harriman, Gould, et ad majorem Dei gloriam hoc genus omne* put on phosphorescence? What have been and are the Vertebrae of our Commercial Life? Ask the intelligent, healthy, normal, American boy to define the word, to give the hallmark of, *Civilization*. And what does Bobby answer? . . . He answers: “RAILROADS.”

And if now and then you turn up that anomaly, a Modern American Church not indecent; and if now and then you come upon a Modern American Office Building, or Factory, or Railroad Station, that is inappositely Gothic—such irregularities demonstrate only that also in America Inveterate Nature, howsoever unholily on her last legs, is not yet—even here—down and out.

But a railway station remains—limp Nature as she must—the Direct Expression of a Higher Will. It possesses and exhibits, granitely, significance. It is appropriate the *noblest* example should be an elaboration—*not*, by the by, “an imitation, close or remote”—of a Roman Bath: such also, in *their* way, signified.

John Ruskin, a Humanist, rightly stated that a railway station should be bare of ornament. Our writer for the Times is not a Humanist. Else he would not go on to wonder that Mr Yeats should not “mention” the Grand Central Terminal Railway Sta-

tion. Zodiacs on the Ceiling are always cozy, to be sure; but such groups of figures as that gummed on the south front of this building are not mentionable. Nor seeable either. For my part, if my route is to take me uptown over the otherwise, I believe, reputable Pershing Viaduct, I am condemned to the nuisance of having to hunt up a species of taxi-cab which in New York City does not abound: I am condemned to the nuisance of having to hunt up a taxi-cab with shades that work. And, entering the Pershing Viaduct, I draw these shades incontinent.

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